VALLEY VOICE

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Huerta Halts Parra State Democratic Party Endorsement for CD 21

Staff Reports

At the California Democratic Party State Convention at the end of February the Democratic State Party endorsement battle for 21st Congressional District moved from a local caucus election for recommendation that had been won by Fowler City Councilman Daniel Parra, but who then lost it on the convention floor.

Bakersfield Lawyer Emilio Huerta, son of Dolores Huerta and candidate for the seat, put a stop to the recommended Parra endorsement. He gathered 550 signatures from delegates, surpassing the 300 required, to send the issue to the convention floor. The near 3,000 state delegates voted to rescind the endorsement. Despite his efforts, Huerta was unable to garner the endorsement for himself.

Emilio Huerta

The sprawling district includes Fresno, Kings, Kern and southern Tulare County. The state party will not offer an endorsement in that congressional district primary race. Huerta will be running against incumbent David Valadao.

In the other local congressional district races, local political activist Louie Campos and aerospace engineer Wendy Reed were endorsed for the 22nd and 23rd Congressional Districts respectively. The 22nd includes most of Tulare County and portions of Fresno County. The 23rd includes Porterville and its surrounding areas as well as a large portion of Kern County. Reed will be running against incumbent and House Minority Whip Kevin McCarthy. Campos will be running against House Chair of the Intelligence Committee, Devin Nunes.

Local assembly candidates who were endorsed were Tulare County Democratic Party Chairman Ruben Macareno for the 26th Assembly District (AD); Dr. Joaquin Arambula, son of former Assemblyman Juan Arumbula, for the 31st AD; and Assemblyman Rudy Salas for the 32nd AD.

The 26th AD includes all of Tulare and Inyo counties and the northern tip of Kern County. The 31st AD includes Fresno County, bordering Tulare and Kings counties; the 32ndAD is comprised of all of Kings and portions of Kern County. Macareno will be running against freshman Assembly Member Devon Mathis.

The endorsement allows the party to spend on his behalf in traditional ways such as mailers, phone-banking and allows the candidates the right to use its desired seal of approval in the campaign.

A decorative faux beam at the Hanford Fox Theater.

Historic Hanford Fox Theater Almost Ready to Rock Again

Dave Adalian

The Hag literally brought the house down in Hanford.

For the last two years, Fox Theater Hanford has sat idle, or at least it appeared so from the outside. Inside, the 1920s-era movie house was being put back in pristine order. However, it wasn't a planned remodel.

The night of March 6, 2014, outlaw county music legend Merle Haggard, father of the Bakersfield Sound and a frequent performer at the Fox, was feeling it mightily.

"The walls were really vibrating, which they do," said theater owner Dan Humason. "I remember commenting he's in rare form. I've done a lot of Merle Haggard (shows) and he was on."

'Inch or Two of White Dust'

A few nights later, Kenny Rogers and his band took the stage for a more reserved show. That was followed by a local production of *The Wizard of Oz*, after which the crew packed up and went home. When they came back, they found an ugly, frightening and maybe deadly scene.

"We came in on Thursday, and everything was just an inch or two of white dust," Humason said. "As we shuffled around, we were stirring up dust. I just assumed it was asbestos. I thought, 'I'm gonna die. That's cool. At least I know how I'm gonna die.' Come to find out asbestos was a '30s thing. We're a '20s-thing. What we found was it was rice-hull ash. Insects hate it. Mice hate it. So do humans. You can still buy it today. It never wears out."

Old Fix at Fault

Fox Theater Hanford ("You always go Fox first, then the town, so Fox Bakersfield, Fox Visalia, Fox Hanford," according to Humason) was constructed in 1929, one of three Fox Theaters in the area, including Visalia's and one in Tulare that has since been torn down. The houses were never intended to host live theater, so Humason had installed trusses for installing lights and other stage effects, and he assumed those had a hand in the historic building's ceiling collapse. He was wrong.

"Since we hang stuff from the rafters a lot, we figured that had something to do with it," he said, but it was a much earlier upgrade at fault. "What brought this down was the air conditioning duct that was built five years after this building was built. They just laid it. It freezes in the attic from time to time, and sometimes it is 140 degrees up there."

For 82 years, extreme thermal differentials had pulled and pushed the old girl until she could stand no more. At least she waited until the house was empty before giving in, perhaps saving a lot of lives in the process.

"Once a little corner came down, it was easy for the rest of it to start getting pulled down, like a carpet upside down," Humason said. "It just swung like a door. It would have cut people's bodies in half. Look how it broke the chairs, and those

FOX continued on **5 »**

Woodlake Valley Cultural Museum Celebrates Its Grand Opening

Catherine Doe

The highly anticipated grand opening of the Woodlake Valley Cultural Museum took place on February 27. After a blessing by the Four Directions Native American drumming quartet, the crowd was treated to an educational repository of Woodlake's Native American heritage and the town's last two centuries of history.

"Until now people have kept their memorabilia to themselves, some with lots of valuable documents, photos and artifacts from the last 150 years. Now those treasures are out where the public can enjoy them and remember," said Marsha Ingrao, Woodlake Chamber of Commerce secretary.

Years ago Sarah Watts, an old-time Woodlake resident, planted the seed to build a museum to preserve the community's history. After she passed away, Rudy Garcia, Chamber of Commerce president, made her vision a reality. He presented the idea of the museum to the Woodlake City Council, which in turn designated a vacant piece of land on Magnolia Street to be used as a building site. Ed Michum, of Oral E. Michum Inc., donated the materials and John Wood constructed the building. Their generous donations have made it possible for the Museum to be owned free and clear of a mortgage.

The construction of the building took nine months to complete while the collecting and displaying of artifacts took two years to organize.

Marcy Miller, a former Woodlake resident, almost single-handedly set out to do this work to honor her parents and the other families who were original settlers in Woodlake. She had the help of her good friend, Woodlake resident, Debbie Eckenfel, in setting up the displays. Jennifer Malone donated the Native American artifacts and organized that exhibit. Each case represents hours of thought and work.

"Few people have any idea how much time it takes to gather artifacts and pictures, sort them into some kind of an order so that together they tell a story, and then arrange them in the space provided," said Ingrao. "We are all astounded that Marcy, Debby and Jennifer

MUSEUM continued on **5 »**

The Four Directions Native American drumming quartet. Catherine Doe/Valley Voice

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Read On, Macduff

Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill A Mockingbird*-- 1961's Pulitzer Prize winner for fiction--died on February 19 in the same town in which she was born in 1926, Monroeville, Alabama. I have never read her novel.

More properly, I was never assigned to--although I attended a truly great high school. If you Google "the best public high schools in California 2016" you will find my alma mater at number six. I'll admit that using the phrase alma mater--nourishing mother--is a bit of a stretch: after four years, the school unceremoniously expelled me in May of my senior year. Still, I was lucky enough to enjoy one hell of a good education. Never mind that I developed a full-blown case of senioritis, rendering me incapable of deigning to attend a civics class.

What I remember as assigned reading were works such as *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand; *Great Expectations* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, by Charles Dickens. I loved them. In those years I also read *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Catch-22*, much of Kurt Vonnegut and all of the works and collected letters of Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Almost all of John Steinbeck and Jack London. And a good measure of Shakespeare. At this remove, however, I can not quite recall what precisely was assigned and what I read on my own. But I do remember having to read *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck. I loathed it.

I've been a reader all my life. In grade school I polished off The *Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and, I imagine, hundreds of other tomes. To this day, when I'm between books, it's like being without my wife.

But rarely do I read fiction. About 25 years ago it got to the point where I could fairly accurately predict the outcome of the novels I would read--and that took all the novelty out of reading them.

As exercise is for the body, reading is good for the mind. When we first got together--and for a few years afterwards--my wife would often ask me how I knew some obscure fact or other. "I breathe," I always told her, as if everyone should know. What I really meant was, "I read."

Oddly enough, my wife--who is no slouch--does not. Read many books, that is; of newspapers, she is a devourer.

It doesn't matter what you read; it matters *that* you read.

I draw the line, though, at modern technology. I could no more take a kindle on vacation (there's a word I'll have to consult the dictionary about) than I could take a computer into a coffee shop. I require--for my sanity, seemingly--the real thing. Apart from champagne, abalone, art and music, sports victories, the laughter and accomplishments of children, earning money, comedy, the Apollo moon shots and all things to do with Saturday--what could be better than actually handling, in one's hands or on the surface, say, of a table, a book or newspaper?

I'm writing about this now because, shortly after Lee's death, our local PBS station aired an American Masters episode dedicated to her magnum opus. In many testimonials, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was recalled as influential in the lives of those who read it, mostly when young. This does not inspire me to read the novel; rather, it inspires me to encourage youngsters to read in general.

The irony is, though, that only one of our five kids can be called a reader. How this came to pass is totally beyond me. I don't think they know what they're missing. At least, I prefer to think so over the stark fact that they may just not be interested.

What is interesting is both what they do and do not know--as if the internet has provided a wide, though shallow, smattering of data. Sure, they might have information at their fingertips--but not having to wade through a library has deprived them of all the ancillary and tangential facts one amasses during research. The Google experience is a far cry from threading, then scrolling through, a microfiche.

Still, it is a bit of a relief to be able to look up one particular thing, no matter how recondite, when one needs to--especially as the effects of age encroach upon the mind. I may not remember where the car keys are, but if I need to be sure of some arcane minutiae I can secure it instantly. Without even thinking about it.

But reading inherently involves thinking. If you didn't pay any mind to what you were looking at on the page--if you didn't think about what you were reading--you wouldn't really be reading.

Let me paraphrase Descartes here: I read, therefore I am.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

Catherine Doe

The Last Brokered Convention

The last brokered Republican convention was in Philadelphia in 1948. It took Governor Thomas E. Dewey three ballots to beat out several formidable rivals to get a majority of the votes. My grandmother, Florence Doe, was one of those delegates, and late in life she pined for those days when conventions were more than just coronation ceremonies. She attended the 1948, 1952 and 1956 Republican conventions in a time when real excitement ruled the day as each candidate jockeyed for the party's nomination. Back then no one knew who the nominee would be until the convention was over.

If Grandma is looking down on us right now, she may get her wish this year.

A brokered convention is when no candidate receives a majority of the votes on the first ballot. Many in the Republican establishment, and some of the current presidential candidates, are rumored to be angling for a brokered convention this year to stop the run-away train that is Donald Trump. But Gov. Dewey's brokered nomination ended up being a disaster as he lost what the Republicans thought was a sure thing against Harry Truman. This loss prompted the GOP to show up in 1952 with their boxing gloves on and it paid off.

The year 1952 was a banner year for my grandmother. Her only son, Russell Doe, graduated UC Berkeley in June and then married his beautiful college sweetheart, my mom, that November. But something else happened that year to put a smile on my grandmother's face. After 20 years of the Democrats' domination of the White House, Republicans finally won it back – and they were ecstatic. My grandmother not only played a part in the long-awaited Republican victory, but got to witness her friend and fellow convention delegate, Richard Nixon, take his place in Washington DC as the Vice President.

No one could have predicted that hot July in Chicago that one candidate would win, just barely, after the first ballot. A repeat of 1948 was anticipated as it was assumed several ballots would be taken before a winner could be declared. The candidates were California Governor Earl Warren, General Douglas MacArthur, former Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen, General Dwight Eisenhower and the senator from Ohio, Robert Taft. They all arrived at the convention with their loyal group of delegates ready to fight, although Sen. Taft was favored to get the nomination.

The California delegation had pledged its votes to Gov. Warren, unless instructed by the California Central Committee to do otherwise. Given that they could change their vote, the California delegates were vigorously campaigned by the other presidential candidates through letters and telegrams. Yesterday's telegrams were today's Twitter. They took a few more hours to arrive, but arrive they did, and their messages weren't too different from what we hear the candidates say today about each other. My grandmother received her telegrams through the Western Union office in Goshen, and then, the day she arrived, at the Knickerbocker Hotel in Chicago. One of those telegrams encouraging my grandmother to change her vote to Gen. Eisenhower came from Colonel J G Boswell.

In one of the telegrams sent by Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, Gen. Eisenhower's campaign manager, it says, "Senator Taft, despite his fantastic claims will not reach the 500 mark. These Taft claims are obviously a product of panic and desperation to cover up certain defeat. Senator Taft, in my opinion will never receive 500 votes."

He went on to say, "The American public has been shocked by the moral disintegration and outright corruption of the present administration. There is a nationwide determination this year to throw the rascals out once and for all."

On the last day of the Republican Convention, July 11, a straw vote was taken where Sen. Taft did win 500 votes. Gen. Eisenhower won 595, nine short of the required majority. Before the first ballot results could be announced, Gov. Stassen's 19 delegates broke away and changed their vote for Gen. Eisenhower, putting him over the majority needed. That started a cascade of delegates for Gen. Eisenhower and the California delegation was ordered to do the same so they could be recorded as voting for the winner. And thus, through sheer political maneuvering, the Republicans avoided a brokered convention and Gen. Eisenhower won on the first ballot.

Though Gen. Eisenhower's first choice of running mate was Gov. Warren or Gov. Stassen, his advisors suggested he choose a young and energetic senator from California, Richard Nixon. Sen. Nixon was a hard campaigner and a staunch anti-communist and the Eisenhower campaign needed to mollify the Taft conservatives. The story goes that Sen. Nixon was so taken by surprise when asked to be the running mate, he found himself frantically writing his acceptance speech sitting in a fold out chair with his California delegation as my grandmother held back his excited colleagues and media to give him space to write.

On November 4, 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower beat Adlai Stevenson by a landslide and became the first Republican president since Herbert Hoover. Then, four days later, Grandma watched her son get married during a nighttime ceremony at the First Congregational Church in Oroville. My mom addressed Grandma's invitation to "Mother," so in the span of four days, she gained a daughter and the political party she so loved was now in the White House.

Grandma's best year ever wrapped up on January 20, at the presidential inauguration. The group of Californians invited, traveled together, riding in four private train cars from Los Angeles to Washington DC. During the inaugural parade they were seated right across from President Eisenhower's viewing stand. Grandma and a guest were invited to the inaugural ball. She took her sister, Ruth Walder, and the party didn't end until 3 am. The next day the women in her group got a private meeting with Mamie Eisenhower at the White House.

Fast forward to July, 2016 and the question is--will a brokered convention happen again? What will happen if the Republicans arrive in Cleveland with no clear winner, or that winner is someone whom the establishment cannot abide? Will Mr. Trump, Sen. Ted Cruz and Sen. Marco Rubio have to jockey for delegates' votes like the days of old? Do rules still exist that delegates can change their votes and not vote for the candidate for whom their state chose?

Maybe the spirit of my grandmother, and her fellow delegates, could somehow infiltrate the minds and hearts of the current delegates and persuade them to nominate a candidate who is electable and also qualified, like they did in 1952. It would give my grandma something else to do besides roll in her grave over what the Republican Party has now become.

The Only Adult In The Room

Does anyone remember the top-polling Republican presidential candidate early last year? It was Mitt Romney. Now, a year and a half later, everyone is waiting for Gov. Romney and Gov. Jeb Bush to endorse a candidate. As important as their endorsement would have been before Super Tuesday, it did not come.

Who out of the five remaining candidates has the most experience, displays the most diplomacy, and looks the most presidential? The answer to that question is why Gov. Romney and Gov. Bush have not endorsed anyone. They are being pressured into endorsing Gov. Rubio but do not agree with his politics, nor do they think he could win.

Imagine Gov. John Kasich and Secretary Hillary Clinton on the debate stage. Gov. Kasich would have a treasure trove of opposition material to which Sec. Clinton would have no response. Now imagine the same scenario with Mr. Trump. He will invariably pull a Megan Kelly on Sec. Clinton and she will eat him alive. Debate over, election lost.

Both Gov. Romney and Gov. Bush know that moderate Democrats could easily vote for Gov. Kasich over Sec. Clinton, but no Democrat is going to vote for Sen. Rubio. As far as Mr. Trump and Sen. Cruz, Democrats will show up in hoards to vote against them. Seeing as there are more registered Democrats than registered Republicans, that's a losing strategy for the Republican Party.

So what is their problem? Why are Republicans actively nominating someone who will lose the election and take down some senators along the way?

The establishment is reluctantly pushing for Republicans to unite behind Sen. Rubio. But Sen. Rubio, besides being the poster child of Big Brother, is member of the Tea Party. These are the people who relish shutting down the government and say intelligent things like, "Keep the government hands off my Medicaid." When Evangelicals are voting for a thrice divorced, casino-owning former Democrat instead of actual Evangelicals running for president, that is a wakeup call, for everyone.

If Sen. Rubio and Sen. Cruz are waiting for Gov. Bush, and Gov. Romney's endorsement they will be waiting a long time. Neither man is going to endorse Tea Party Evangelicals. Who they want to endorse is Gov. Kasich – the only adult in the room and the only Republican candidate who can beat Hillary Clinton.

Making a Deal with the Devil

The first thought that came to mind when I saw Gov. Chris Christie enter the stage in Fort Worth, Texas with Mr. Trump was, "now there's the Republican Presidential ticket."

Gov. Christie's appearance on that stage, and his endorsement of Mr.

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Shuklian Announces Local Endorsements

Visalia City Councilmember and candidate for Tulare County Board of Supervisors in District 3, Amy Shuklian, announced an impressive list of local endorsements from community leaders late February. Shuklian is challenging incumbent Supervisor Phil Cox for the seat.

Whereas most other elections will be decided in November, the race for supervisor will end in June because there are only two candidates. Unless a third person files before March 11, the candidate who receives over 50% of the vote will win the supervisorial seat outright.

This contrasts with the race for Tulare County Supervisor District 1, where eight candidates have filed to run for supervisor. The likelihood of just one getting over 50% of the vote seems scant. The top two vote-getters will advance to the general election in November.

More candidates may throw their hat in the ring for District 1, but it is unlikely anyone would be willing to challenge Shuklian and Cox for district 3 because both enjoy high name recognition. It costs candidates $1000 to file in addition to the cost of the campaign. Though Shuklian has out-fundraised Cox, both candidates have a big enough war chest that the filing fee were not a hardship.

The following is a list of Shuklians new endorsements:

Stan Simpson, Chairman Emeritus Buckman Mitchell, Inc.

Troy Korsgaden, Korsgaden/Jansma Farm Insurance Agency

Eric Shannon, CRS Farming

Mike Shannon, S-K Ranch Management

Fred Lagomarsino, Lagomarsino Group

Todd Kinosian, Sundale Sales Inc.

Joe Altschule, Attorney

Brucinda (Cindy) Meyers, Morgan Stanley Financial Advisors

Nanette Kuswa DVM

Larry Benevento, ServiceMaster by Benevento

"I am proud to support Amy's campaign for supervisor. She has always put our community first and I know that we can count on her to deliver results on the Board of Supervisors," said Troy Korsgaden, CEO and Founder Korsgaden International.

The partial list of endorsements comes on the heels of a fundraising quarter where Shuklian outraised the incumbent by more than seven to one. More information about Amy Shuklian for Tulare County Supervisor can be found on her website at www.amyforsupervisor.com.

Cox Announces Boudreaux's Endorsement

Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux has endorsed Phil Cox for District 3 Supervisor. "Phil has been there for the Sheriff's Department and given us the tools we need to fight crime here in Tulare County. He understands law enforcement and is committed in every way to make this county a safe place to raise our families. I support Phil and encourage the voters in District 3 to support him as well," Boudreaux said.

"I am humbled and grateful to have the endorsement of a leader such as Sheriff Boudreaux," replied Cox." His leadership and compassion during the last few weeks has held our Sheriff's Department together and made them an even stronger organization than before. I will do all I can to continue my unwavering support for the men and women who put on a uniform, a badge and a gun every day to make our homes and communities safe."

While on the Board of Supervisors Cox has lead the way to implement the following improvements: Creation of North and South County Gang Units, arming every patrol deputy with less than lethal Tasers and providing improved hand held radios for all deputies in the field.

"Visalia for Bernie" Begins Operations

Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders supporters held their first public local meeting under the banner "Visalia for Bernie" during the last week of February.

The organization, founded by Caty Wagner-Verduzco of Visalia, met at the Visalia Public Library in downtown Visalia. The first meeting focused on setting the local agenda for the rest of the presidential primary campaign.

Wagner-Verduzco is working closely with local Democratic leaders and organizations such as Ruben Macareno, Robert Cole, Victor Villalvazo, the Visalia Democratic Club, the Stonewall Democrats, Tulare County Democratic Party and the Latino Democrats of Tulare County.

The group did Super Tuesday phone banking for Sanders at the offices of the Tulare County Democratic Party on the Monday evening before and on Super Tuesday morning. They are also scheduled to do voter registration in downtown Visalia on Sunday, March 6.

According to Wagner-Verduzco, the group recognizes the Vermont Senator as the people's candidate because his platforms reflect the interests of the public first and foremost. They feel that he stands strong on family values by pushing for universal childcare and pre-kindergarten education, equal pay for women, and paid family and medical leave.

She cites Sanders' plans to create 13 million jobs for Americans by repairing crumbling infrastructure, and another one million jobs specifically for disadvantaged young people, which affects Visalia directly with our limited access to four-year colleges and advanced degree programs.

For opportunities to participate or more information, contact Wagner-Verduzco at catywagner@gmail.com. To receive updates and get involved join the Facebook group Visalia for Bernie Sanders. Learn more about Bernie Sanders at berniesanders.com.

Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

Trump, confirmed what I predicted a year ago in my column of February 5, 2015. "I don't think Gov. Christie is running for president in 2016. I think he is running for vice president."

I predicted last year that Gov. Christie would make it through the Iowa caucus then graciously bow out after proving his mettle as a viable candidate. That's exactly what he did this year in the last Republican debate when he effectively dressed down Sen. Rubio for being shallow and robotic.

During Gov. Christie's campaign it was revealed how unpopular he was in his own state. He also has termed out as Governor. From this vantage point, being chosen as Mr. Trump's running mate must be looking better than being unemployed in New Jersey. But Gov. Christie has made a deal with the devil. The New Hampshire Union Leader has said, "Boy were we wrong," about their endorsement of Gov. Christie for president, and his campaign finance chair, Meg Whitman, said his Trump endorsement was "an astonishing display of political opportunism."

The *Washington Post's* Jennifer Rubin wrote in an op-ed this weekend, "If it had not been obvious to him before this weekend, his political career is essentially over." Truer words were never spoken if Mr. Trumps does not chose Gov. Christie as his vice presidential running mate.

And Finally……

Henry Cabot Lodge was a respected Massachusetts Senator, distinguished soldier in WWII and went on to be nominee Richard Nixon's running mate in his 1960 campaign against John F. Kennedy. Sen. Cabot was the leader of the moderate wing of the Republican Party when he convinced Gen. Eisenhower to run for president in 1952. Senator Robert Taft, who was actually favored to win the nomination, was the candidate of the party's conservative faction.

It is important to take this into consideration when reading the following biography of Sen. Taft in a magazine produced for the 1952 convention. His biography ended with these thoughts:

Code of a Good Citizen

"As a Good Citizen of Our American Republic……..

- I BELIEVE in a government in which I choose, by secret ballot, those I want to represent me in making the laws of the land – and I expect complete honesty in those I elect.
- I BELIEVE that by being kind, honest and fair toward all other citizens I shall be building a better America for myself and for my children.
- I BELIEVE that each person should have the freedom to worship God as he chooses and freedom to think and write what he wishes so long as he does not plan to change our representative form of government."
- I BELIEVE that all citizens, regardless of race or religion, should have equal opportunities to work – to invest their savings in some honest business – to obtain an education – to be free from search or seizure without a warrant – and if accused, to be given a fair trial by jury.
- I BELIEVE that although our American Democracy is not perfect, it is my duty to work toward the perfection or it, to uphold the ideals of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and to keep faith with the founders of our country.

Sen. Taft's biography ends with a quote from James Anthony Froude, "The morale law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to paid at last."

Here's look'n at you Mr. Trump and Sen. Cruz.

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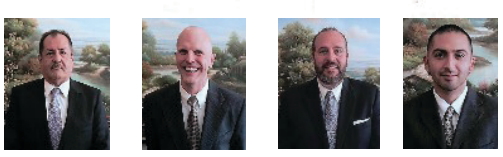
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Fox

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are cast iron."

'Another 85 Years'

If it had been the rigging trusses installed by Humason at fault, instead of the AC system added in 1934, the story could have signaled the Fox's tragic end. Instead, the theater's insurance kicked in, paying for the entire fix. Rebuilding has inspired Humason to invest more money, energy and time into the Fox, which his family has owned since 1979.

"It went for 85 years," he said. "Let's go for another 85 years."

The Fox will officially reopen on April 30 with a performance by rocker Jackson Browne. A silent movie night featuring the theater's pipe organ is scheduled for May 7. Tickets are available at foxhanford.com.

"We're having a soft opening, then get really going in the fall," said Humason. "We don't do a lot in the summer."

Upgrades and ADA

While the theater was closed for repair, Humason took the opportunity to upgrade the lobby, removing the snack bar, another modernization from the 1930's.

The refurbished interior of the Fox Hanford Theater. Nancy Vigran/Valley Voice

"We got a picture (of the lobby's original condition), and if we want to now duplicate that, we can," he said. "Everything's on wheels. If I need to clean it up for a school or something, I can do that. This way, we'll have a better lobby, and we can do shows in the lobby."

An Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant unisex bathroom has also been added at a cost of more than $55,000. Two rows of seats at the top of the sloped auditorium were removed and the incline flattened to provide an area for wheelchairs. While every business is supposed to have these amenities, Fox Hanford didn't, and the collapse of the ceiling may have saved Humason from being sued for noncompliance. A disabled individual has been suing local businesses, receiving cash settlements in the process.

"Had we been open, we very well could have been sued," Humason said. "We treat our handicapped clients very well. They're attended at all times, even if they come without an attendant."

A New Look

With the removal of a small office space from the lobby, Humason was able to return one of the carved decorative beams -- or rather a clever modern replacement -- that give the theater its unique art deco styling.

"The beam we thought was on the ceiling, wasn't," Humason said. "I had the remnants under the stage since '82. We took it down to Burbank and had a 3D mold made."

Fox Theaters are known for their starry ceilings, and those are in place now in Hanford, along with a modern, computer-driven addition to the lighting.

"Some of my crew were out doing Paul McCartney, and he had an LED curtain. It sounded pretty cool," Humason said. "So, since I knew I was putting in a new ceiling, I took the opportunity to install (conduit) prior to plastering. I'm calling them 'star ports.' I can use them to light up the ceiling. So, what we have is a low-power Jumbotron."

When the theater reopens, expect everything to be done right.

"We're taking our time with this, obviously," Humason said.

Museum

Continued from p. 1

could put together a beautiful museum with no museum experience, and not much help."

Part of the museum-opening ceremony included the Tule River Veterans who conducted a flag ceremony, at the end of which Delbert Davis said there are many tribes and many people but just one Creator to whom they pray.

According to Malone, a Woodlake Chamber of Commerce member, the Four Directions Native American Drumming Quartet represents the Wukchumni, Wuksachi, and Mono Tribes. Malone is from the Wukchumni Tribe and her grandmother is the last native speaker of the language. One section of the museum is her family's artifacts. She plans on displaying more of her tribe's artifacts in an adjoining room and conducting a basket weaving class.

The first basket weaving class in the new museum is scheduled for Saturday, March 26 from 11am-1pm. More details can be found on the museum's Facebook and website. Also on their website is a film with Malone's grandmother, Marie Wilcox, depicting the community's effort to keep the Wukchumni language alive. The Wukchumni Tribe lived mostly in the Dry Creek Woodlake area.

Malone is hoping that local schools make a reservation to tour the museum. She said that she doesn't live in the past but wants to educate children in current Native American philosophy and their views of life, family and nature. "It's important to pass our beliefs to the younger generations," Malone said.

Her goal is to change out the Native American exhibit about every three months to showcase other tribes that lived in the area.

Airforce One Pilot Carl Peden

During an earlier event on February 13, the museum held a special preview for all the museum's major donors. At that gathering, Carl Peden stood in front of the crowd to speak of his experiences as an Air Force One pilot for several of our country's presidents. Peden graduated in 1947 from Woodlake High School.

At the end of his speech, he took off his jacket and handed it to Rudy Garcia to put in the museum. His action inspired many others to come forward with ideas of things they could donate to the museum which will keep it fresh for many years to come. Peden stands in front of the list of the many community members who joined to make this project a possibility.

"Some asked me what Air Force One had to do with Woodlake, and had Carl Peden not been the pilot, I could have answered, 'nothing.' But this man showed me that Woodlake, small agricultural town in the rural outskirts of the San Joaquin Valley, reaches and influences far beyond Woodlake," said Ingrao. "Carl Peden, so vibrant at the Museum VIP opening, passed away two days later on President's Day. We all mourn his passing."

Woodlake Valley Cultural Museum
140 N. Magnolia, Woodlake
Museum hours:
Friday 12:00 – 4:00
Saturday 10:00 – 2:00
Contact for museum: Marsha Ingaro — 559 303-9241
Contact for Basket Weaving Class:
Jennifer Malone — 559 280-0712

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Agriculture

California Citrus Growers turn to FL, TX for answers to Huanglongbing

California Citrus Mutual

California Citrus Mutual's Annual Citrus Showcase is Thursday, March 3 at the Visalia Convention Center.

Over 500 citrus growers and industry members are expected to attend the highly anticipated Luncheon program titled "Huanglongbing: Lessons for the Frontline." Attendees will hear from a panel of Florida and Texas citrus growers about how they're responding to Huanglongbing - a deadly, incurable plant disease that is taking over the citrus industries in their states. The luncheon is hosted by CCM with support from Citrus Pest & Disease Prevention Program.

Citrus growers are edge following recent discoveries of Huanglongbing in the Los Angeles Basin. If the disease is allowed to take hold, it will be a death sentence for California citrus. Stopping the insect vector, the Asian citrus psyllid, is the best and only defense against Huanglongbing. But will it be enough to save the California citrus industry?

In Texas, growers are rapidly removing infected trees. In Florida, citrus growers have been battling against the disease for over a decade, in which time statewide production has plummeted by 70% and over 100,000 acres have been removed. As a result the Florida economy has suffered the loss of $7.8 billion in revenue and 7,513 jobs since 2007.

What factors contributed to the rapid spread of the disease and how can growers in California protect themselves from the same fate? The panel, moderated by CCM President Joel Nelsen, will address these questions and more.

Media are invited to attend at no charge, however, reservations are required. Contact Alyssa Houtby, Director of Public Affairs at 559.592.3790. Please be advised that media packets will be available at the California Citrus Mutual trade show booth in the Exhibit Hall.

At 1:30 p.m. immediately following the panel discussion members of the media are invited to attend a press conference in San Joaquin Room A at the Visalia Convention Center to hear more from the panelists. Grower representatives from CCM and the Citrus Pest Disease Prevention Program as well as agriculture officials from the California Department of Food and Agriculture will also be available for comment.

California Citrus Mutual is a non-profit trade association of citrus growers, with approximately 2,200 members representing 70% California's 362,000-acre, $3 billion citrus industry. The mission of California Citrus Mutual is to inform, educate, and advocate on behalf of citrus growers. The Exeter, California-based organization was founded in 1977.

Research Aims to Counteract Citrus Disease

Kate Campbell, CFBF

To protect California citrus groves from the plant disease HLB, researchers focus on fighting the insect that carries the disease and on early detection of HLB itself.

With an emphasis on early detection, California citrus farmers are racing along with researchers to find a cure for the deadly bacterial plant disease huanglongbing, also called HLB or citrus greening.

They are working to control the Asian citrus psyllid, an invasive pest that can spread the disease, while maintaining the health of their trees. They also help fund research while tracking the latest scientific findings. As more residential citrus trees test positive for HLB, the pace of research is picking up.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced in early February it had awarded $20.1 million nationally in grants for university research and cooperative extension projects to help fight the disease.

Beth Grafton-Cardwell, director of the University of California Lindcove Research and Extension Center in Exeter and a leading expert on both the Asian citrus psyllid and HLB, said California research emphasizes psyllid control and techniques for early detection of the disease.

Most of the disease research is taking place in Florida, where HLB is widespread. USDA said the disease has affected more than 75 percent of Florida citrus crops and threatens production across the United States.

The Asian Citrus Psyllid can spread the HLB citrus disease. Courtesy/UC Riverside CISR

HLB has also been found in Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas, as well as on several residential trees in Southern California. A total of 15 U.S. states or territories are under full or partial quarantine due to the presence of the psyllids, which signals the eventual arrival of HLB.

Grafton-Cardwell said researchers in California are working on advanced biochemical PCR (polymerase chain reaction) techniques. The approach uses molecular genetics to target minute quantities of DNA or RNA to indicate presence of HLB in a tree, but has its limitations.

"One of the problems with this approach is that if an infected psyllid first lands on a tree leaf and injects the bacteria, it creates a localized infection, just a spot," she explained. "It could take years for the bacteria to move throughout the tree."

She said the goal is to find the bacterium in trees much closer to the time of initial infection. Early detection would allow farmers to take timely action and pull out infected trees or even those suspected of infection, she said, noting regulators will likely wait for positive test results before ordering pullouts. Researchers are concerned that may be too late to stop the infection's spread.

There are several early-detection research projects going on now in California, she said.

Researchers are working on developing a mobile VOC (volatile organic compound) sniffer device that could be used in citrus groves to pick up traces of HLB off-gassing from infected trees. Devices being tested are sensitive to VOCs below parts-per-billion levels and are relatively compact, portable and low-cost, Grafton-Cardwell said.

"That system is about a year or two away, which is much closer than the estimated 10 years to 15 years it will take to get disease-resistant rootstock," she said. "The (VOC) system is working now, but we need to figure out how early is early in terms of detection."

Another early-detection approach involves testing citrus leaves to detect metabolites produced by the bacteria or the tree. In Florida, dogs are being trained to detect the presence of the bacterium. California researchers are also testing a twist-tie system that would indicate HLB presence in trees, and scientists are developing field DNA test kits.

"If we could move up detection techniques even by six months it would help," Grafton-Cardwell said.

High-volume laboratories for testing psyllids, citrus leaves and plant tissue for HLB play an important role in the disease-detection process, she said. These labs have the staff and equipment to handle more material than other kinds of testing facilities.

In Florida, the situation got out of control because symptoms were not apparent, according to Greg McCollum, a USDA research plant physiologist. He told researchers attending a summit on the pest and disease last fall that once the HLB pathogen was detected in a Florida citrus grove, "we found the pathogen everywhere."

In California, with more than 270,000 acres of commercial citrus groves at stake and extensive ornamental citrus plantings, he said the state is ahead of the curve with its early-detection research—and that he hopes it can stay that way.

"Currently, the standard three-pronged approach—controlling psyllids, removing infected trees and only planting clean nursery stock—is still the most important management strategy," McCollum said.

The Visalia-based Citrus Research Board is contributing funds to a number of early-detection research projects, board President Gary Schultz said. The board is concentrating some of its funding on field testing of early-detection techniques by growers.

Schultz said board subcommittees want to determine what early-detection capability might mean in terms of farm economics. Grower costs might include new equipment, testing services, tree pull-out and disposal expenses, soil treatment, replanting and production losses.

"Reliable data on the potential economic impact of fighting the disease in the coming decade is currently being evaluated, " Schultz said.

"The experience in Florida has been helpful in terms of timing issues in the pest and disease progression," he said. "We've asked Florida and Texas growers what they would have done differently. There has been excellent collaboration between growers in the citrus states about how to handle this problem on the ground."

The psyllid and HLB are a major priority of the main citrus-producing states and it's a priority of the USDA and leading universities, Schultz said.

"Where we'll be in the next three to five years is hard to say, but we wake up every day and work on it," he said.

(Kate Campbell is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be reached at kcampbell@cfbf.com.)

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Agriculture

'Tech Teams' Evalate Beehives for Resilience

Christine Souza, CFBF

Commercial beekeepers, who have moved honeybees into California almond orchards for pollination, say they remain concerned about whether they will be able to continue to supply growers with enough healthy bees to meet the future needs of pollination and remain profitable.

Impacts including drought-related reductions in forage, added mite and disease pressures, and unintended exposure to crop-protection materials have contributed to bee losses reported throughout the nation. To combat these challenges, apiarists have emphasized the need for improved research, including work being conducted in orchards this winter by the Bee Informed Partnership, a collaboration by leading research laboratories and universities to better understand honeybee health.

At the start of pollination season, commercial beekeeper and bee breeder Jonathan Hofland of Dixon received a visit from the Bee Informed Partnership Tech Transfer Team, represented by field agents Robert Snyder and Ben Sallmann. The duo, based at the University of California Cooperative Extension office in Butte County, visits a select group of commercial beekeepers to sample colonies, looking for pests and diseases and to assist in stock selection.

"It's about the long-term and good genetics in our bee supply," Hofland said. "We're queen breeders, so the tech team is an impartial data collector; they analyze our bees and can tell us if they see problems. Having the bees tested dramatically increases overall survival."

Hofland added that the tech team looks for flaws in hives that he is selecting for future breeding, which helps him find the best breeding stock and improves his bees' genetic line.

"What they do is an indirect connection to almonds," he said, "but many queen breeders work with the tech team and breed queens for others that bring bees into the almonds."

Sallman said the team looks at what factors might be killing a hive, such as whether varroa mites are transmitting viruses that can be more harmful than damage caused by the mites themselves. Drought and resulting lack of forage worsens the mite situation, he said, because bee colonies become weaker and the mites "tend to get a better foothold when colonies are struggling in other ways."

"A lot of what we do is sampling for the varroa mite. It's the biggest problem that the beekeepers are facing and is a constant battle," Sallmann said. "Due to the density of bees, everything is packed so close together that there's a lot of reinfestation. It's like playing Whac-A-Mole—one beekeeper treats over here and then the other beekeeper doesn't and mites are reproducing, then the colonies start to decline and the mites take over."

Through the Bee Informed Partnership, data collected by tech teams across the country provide beekeepers with knowledge to make timely management decisions to maintain healthy colonies. Samples collected by the tech teams are sent to the bee diagnostic team at the University of Maryland. Reports provide general information about how bees are faring in various parts of the country, while ensuring individual beekeeper information remains confidential.

The almond bloom, which typically occurs from mid-February to mid-March, came a little earlier than usual this year due to warm February temperatures, though recent rains caused some growers to consider fungicide applications.

"It's been kind of wet and rainy, so hopefully the weather will stabilize so that pollination can actually happen, since bees can't forage when it is raining. Hopefully, we'll have enough bees to pollinate everything," UC Davis extension apiculturist Elina Lastro Niño said.

An estimated 1.8 million honeybee colonies are needed to pollinate the state's growing almond crop, and Niño said early indications are that there might be fewer colonies available this season.

"Beekeepers are saying that there are higher bee losses than they were expecting and I've been hearing more about higher varroa mite loads," Niño said. "Last year, the season started quite early so that could have given the mites extra time to produce one or two additional generations. Plus, beekeepers have to treat more often for mites, which gets me thinking about resistance development."

The season may have started with a slight increase in the number of hives, yet once beekeepers lose bees they must split one hive into two, which requires them to "put more into the hives, whether it is feeding them or treating them, so there are increased inputs into the hive to keep it alive," Niño said.

Bee Informed Partnership crop protection agents Robert Snyder and Ben Sallmann, above, collect samples of bees from colonies at an almond orchard in Dixon. Once bees are tested, the results can help beekeepers make informed decisions about treatment of the hives and lead to improved bee genetics. Christine Souza/CFBF

"If you lose 40 percent of bees, you have to make up for those by splitting the hives," she said. "(When) you take a frame of brood out of a hive to split the hive, that automatically costs you about two frames of honey that you won't make from that colony now because it has less of a workforce. You are losing some of that honey crop."

Gordon Wardell, bee biologist for Paramount Farming Co., said some beekeepers are reporting bee losses between 40 percent and 60 percent. In general, beekeepers say rental prices have risen this year to the $170-185 range, or $10-15 more than rental prices seen last year.

Wardell serves as board chairman for Project Apis m., a nonprofit organization dedicated to honeybee research, and called efforts to bring nearly 2 million pollination-strength colonies into California for the almond bloom "a testament to the proficiency and tenacity of our nation's commercial beekeepers."

In another initiative aimed at improved honeybee health, the Bayer Crop Science Division announced last week it is partnering with Project Apis m. to sponsor a multi-year, $1 million research effort with Bayer-funded research grants focused on an economic assessment of the cost of commercial beekeeping; creating best management practices for commercial beekeeping based on colony health performance; evaluating the use of "smart hive" technology to monitor bee health during commercial migratory operations; and assessing honeybee genetics.

(Christine Souza is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be contacted at csouza@cfbf.com.)

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Heat Safety Remains Priority for Regulators

Bob Johnson, CFBF

Heat illness prevention will continue as the No. 1 priority for Cal/OSHA inspections on the state's farms in 2016, and the United Farm Workers union likely will be actively involved in looking for problems, according to farm-safety specialists.

Under settlement terms of a lawsuit known as Bautista v. Cal/OSHA, the union can have evidence it gathers about alleged non-compliance with the state heat-protection standard seriously considered by Cal/OSHA, the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

Last summer, using an access regulation adopted by the state Agricultural Labor Relations Board, UFW agents entered farms and ranches throughout California, according to Bryan Little, chief operating officer of the Farm Employers Labor Service.

"Their stated purpose was to educate farmworkers about heat illness," Little said. "Officially, the UFW has no more priority than anyone else does. The reality is that complaints from the UFW are given priority."

Little made his remarks as regulators, attorneys and other experts working for the state's farmers discussed enforcement of the Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Standard during the annual AgSafe Conference in Monterey last week.

The UFW likely will continue seeking access to the state's farms—the union filed 65 to 70 "Notices of Intent to Take Access" with the ALRB last year as part of what the union called "heat sweeps," Little said. Safety specialists said the best defense is to know the heat illness regulations and follow them.

"It's important to be in compliance with the heat illness prevention standard," said Little, who is also director of employment policy for the California Farm Bureau Federation. "The good news is that (state Department of Industrial Relations Director) Christine Baker said the industry is at a high rate of compliance with heat illness inspections."

There were no heat illness deaths in California agriculture last year, according to Baker.

"Employers have a primary responsibility for providing training to avoid injuries and illness," she said. "Every workplace injury or illness could have been prevented, and should have been prevented. By empowering California workers with the knowledge of how to work safely, we will all be better off."

The most common reasons for citations to agricultural employers after heat-safety inspections have to do with failure to produce written plans for preventing heat illness.

"About 50 or 60 percent of the heat illness citations we issue are for not giving us the program," said William Krycia, state coordinator of Cal/OSHA Enforcement.

A copy of an employer's heat illness prevention program must be kept at the work site, not only back at the office, and it must be presented to a Cal/OSHA inspector upon request.

"Make sure you know what your emergency response procedures are," Krycia said. "That is the second most common citation. You have to have a supervisor or designee stay with someone who is feeling sick."

Under the heat illness prevention standard, shade must be present for all employees on a work break when the

SAFETY continued on **9 »**

Agriculture

Farmers Consider Planting Options Amid Uncertainty

Ching Lee, CFBF

A wetter winter this year has cast a more-positive water outlook for some farmers in the state, as they make their planting decisions for the coming season.

But the prospect of tighter water supplies during the summer, combined with sagging commodity prices, makes certain crops even more unattractive this year.

Alfalfa acreage and yield have been dropping steadily since 2012 due to water shortages. They may drop even further this year, as farmers choose not to fully irrigate existing fields while having little incentive to plant new ones due to lower prices.

"We haven't planted any new alfalfa for over two years now, just because of water and price concerns," Merced County farmer Cannon Michael said.

His farm used to devote "quite a number of acres" to the forage crop, but it is now "down to our lowest amount we've ever had," he noted.

Michael said his water picture for the year looks better, because his area has senior water rights. Still, he said summer water supplies may continue to be tight this year. And with lower market prices for most everything he grows—from tomatoes to cotton to alfalfa—he said there's still "a lot of difficulty in deciding" what and how much to plant.

Unlike last year, when he was forced to idle a third of his farm due to water shortages, Michael said he may have to fallow 10 percent this year.

"If we get in a tight situation in the summertime, we probably won't irrigate alfalfa at all, just so we can use that water for the tomatoes or some of our other crops," he said.

He's also trying two new crops—carrots and watermelon—in order to diversify, "change things up and spread the risk around," he said.

Despite flat cotton prices, Michael said he plans to grow as much pima as he can, but noted that a wet spring could thwart those plans if too much rain does not allow him to get in the field. Pima cotton commands a higher price, he said, especially now that he's part of a program that uses DNA technology to verify the authenticity of the high-quality cotton, distinguishing it from adulterated fibers.

He said he still plans to devote "a pretty good amount" of his acreage to processing tomatoes and some to fresh-market tomatoes, both of which allow more planting flexibility if there is a wet spring. Tomatoes can still be planted late, he noted, unlike cotton, which does not yield well if planted after late April.

Kern County farmer Travis Fugitt said he also expects to have more water to farm this year. Whereas for the last three years he had no surface water for irrigation, he said he thinks he will receive two or three months of district water this year, but he won't know what his full allotment will be for another month. He also has access to groundwater.

While he's still finalizing his planting decisions, the one crop he knows he'll be growing is cotton for seed, because it has been contracted. He said his remaining acres will likely be planted in additional cotton and maybe corn. He planted corn last year but is now considering not planting it because of lower prices. He's also hesitant about planting corn silage, because of limited water supplies and because he hasn't heard a definite price for it yet.

Fugitt noted prices for feed and forage crops have been sluggish, particularly alfalfa because lower fuel costs have allowed dairy farmers to transport hay from Nevada and other surrounding states. With not much incentive to grow those crops, Fugitt said he's looking toward growing more cotton this year, as that is one field crop for which prices have remained steady.

Like Michael, he also has not planted any new alfalfa and may even plow under his existing fields after one or two more cuttings, if prices remain low. In its place, he may plant more almonds. He noted he has already replaced 40 acres of alfalfa with almonds.

Fallowing may still be an option, he said, but more than likely he would plant safflower as a cover crop on that ground to cover any pre-irrigation costs. If it ends up making a marketable crop, he said he would still harvest it.

"We're still not sure what to do," Fugitt said. "We'll probably have to lock it down within the next 30 days or less. We'll be planting cotton probably around March 10."

In terms of water availability, Placer County rice farmer Lorraine Greco said she's about 80 percent certain that she'll be able to receive her full water allotment from the Placer County Water Agency. As such, she's planning to plant all of her acreage this year. At this point, late spring rains would be the only problem that could prevent her from planting on time, she said.

Summer strawberry acreage is projected to be down nearly 27 percent, according to the California Strawberry Commission, although spokeswoman Carolyn O'Donnell said that "could completely change come summer."

"It's been a slow progression of things," she said of the state's eroding strawberry acreage.

She noted that while consumer demand for strawberries remains strong, farmers continue to see rising production costs and regulatory restraints that either restrict acreage or where the crop can be grown. Because strawberries require specific climate and growing conditions and are usually grown in the state's coastal region, O'Donnell said, it is not likely for production to move elsewhere. Most of the state's summer production comes from the Oxnard and Santa Maria districts.

Water availability may figure into the projected summer acreage being reduced, she said, but it may also be related to demand and labor availability.

While the El Niño winter has delivered a healthier snowpack and more water to some parts of the state, Ventura County vegetable grower Ed Terry said "rainfall has been nil" for his region. He farms a variety of row crops, including bell peppers, celery, cilantro, spinach and strawberries, all of which he grows on contract. Because he relies on groundwater for nearly all of his irrigation and is concerned about draining his aquifer, he said he may have to scale back 10 percent to 20 percent of his acreage for the first time this year.

"If we don't have a March miracle, I think this time next year it's going to be a more desperate situation in Ventura County," Terry said.

(Ching Lee is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be contacted at clee@cfbf.com.)

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Commentary: Lessons of 1986 Floods Continue to Reverberate

Dave Kranz, CFBF

"North state wringing out after record rains," read the top headline in Ag Alert® 30 years ago this week. As farmers, ranchers and residents from communities hit by the storms of 1986 observe the anniversary of the downpour, it's an opportunity to reflect on the forces California water planners must deal with, and the ongoing need to add flexibility to the state's water system.

In early 1986, California was coming off of two previous dry years. By late January, Ag Alert could report that storms had "eased concerns that 1986 would be the third below-normal water supply year."

And during one week in mid-February, the outlook turned from concerns about lingering drought to concerns about the impact of storms that flooded more than 300,000 acres of California farmland.

In our issue of Feb. 24, 1986, Ag Alert reported that the six-day storm siege that "rampaged through Northern California" had left homeowners and farmers with hundreds of millions of dollars in damage and tons of debris to clear.

"Within eight days, the storm reversed the state's water outlook for 1986, from a water-short drought year to a crisis of too much water for the dam and river system to handle," the front-page story reported.

Flooding was particularly damaging in the Sacramento and Napa valleys, but farming regions in many parts of California reported impacts, with losses to tree, vegetable, berry and field crops.

Despite the damage caused in 1986, the strong storms showed the importance of upstream reservoirs such as Shasta, Oroville and Folsom, which act as a first line of defense against flooding in the Central Valley.

In 1986, the population of California stood at about 27 million. Now, we're at more than 38 million and, as our state has grown and it has struggled through four years of drought, we're hearing echoes of 1986 as Californians discuss how to handle storm flows in an El Niño winter.

Water districts have criticized

COMMENTARY continued on **9 »**

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Chief Jason Salazar Announces Lieutenant Promotion

Staff Reports

Chief Jason Salazar announces the promotion of Ron Epp to the position of Lieutenant.

Ron began his career with the Visalia Police Department as a Police Officer in 1995. As a Police Officer, Ron was assigned to the Patrol Bureau and the Field Training Unit.

In October 2002, Ron was promoted to the rank of Agent and was assigned to the Patrol Bureau and the Traffic Unit.

In June of 2007, Ron was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. As a Sergeant, Ron was assigned to the Patrol Bureau, Narcotics Unit, and as a Rangemaster. Prior to his promotion, Ron had been a member of S.W.A.T. for the last 19 years.

Ron holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and a Master of Science Degree in Criminology. He is also a graduate of the Sherman Block Leadership Institute and Los Angeles Police Department's West Point Leadership program.

As a Lieutenant, Ron will be assigned as a Night Watch Commander.

Lieutenant Ron Epp. Courtesy/VPD

Visalia Police Chief Jason Salazar. Courtesy/VPD

David Alavezos Appointed Assistant District Attorney

Staff Reports

On February 23, Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward announced the appointment of David Alavezos to the position of Assistant District Attorney. Alavezos fills the position vacated by the Honorable Anthony Fultz, who was appointed to the Tulare County Superior Court by Governor Jerry Brown in December 2015.

Alavezos brings decades of experience and leadership to the position that oversees numerous prosecutors and support staff. After receiving a BA in Political Science and a BS in Psychology from Northern Arizona University in 1988, Alavezos graduated with a Juris Doctor from the University of Arizona in 1991.

Alavezos is a career prosecutor and began his career as a Deputy District Attorney in Mendocino County in 1992. Since 1999, Alavezos has served at the Tulare County District Attorney's Office as a Deputy and Supervising Deputy District Attorney. As supervisor, he oversaw the District Attorney's financial crimes unit and major crimes team. Alavezos has prosecuted over 130 trials in his stellar career, with 31 of those trials being murder prosecutions. Alavezos has been named "Prosecutor of the Year" by the Visalia Knights of Columbus in 2000 and 2015.

"David is the right person for the job. His dedication and commitment to the success of this office is absolute. He is already proven to be an exceptional prosecutor and mentor and is highly respected by staff. I look forward to employing his expertise at a high level," said District Attorney Ward.

Safety

Continued from p. 7

temperature exceeds 80 degrees, and one quart of cool, fresh and pure water per employee per hour must be provided. Agricultural employees must take a 10-minute heat break every two hours when the temperature reaches 95 degrees. Many heat-safety plans are far more detailed than the standard requires, but elements voluntarily included in a plan must be followed.

"The written plan must be established, implemented, maintained and effective," said Lisa Prince, a partner in the Healdsburg law firm of Walter and Prince LLC. "If your plan requires things that are not in the regulations, if you don't follow your own plan, you open yourself up to a citation."

Changes in the details of the heat-safety requirements implemented for the 2015 season are available on the Cal/OSHA website.

Maintaining and implementing a strong heat-safety plan is, by far, the single most effective thing agricultural employers can do to prepare themselves for the UFW taking access to their farm during its "heat sweeps," Prince said.

"Our magic bullet is to be compliant," she said. "We're going to have the written plans and make sure we know how we're going to implement them. The more documentation of your compliance, the better off you're going to be."

If Cal/OSHA comes to inspect the farm, Prince advised agricultural employers to conduct their own, parallel investigation.

"It is recommended that as the information is being gathered, your representative is also gathering information," she said. "If they are taking photographs, you should take photographs. If they are taking measurements, you should take measurements. I don't think it's a bad idea to include some ideas of how to handle an inspection as part of your supervisor's manual."

This parallel investigation is particularly important because, under terms of the Bautista settlement, a citation may be issued based on testimony given by someone who cannot currently be found.

"We will need to follow the investigation more closely, and conduct our own interviews, because the division may try to submit declarations that were taken a year ago from people who are no longer available to cross-examine," Prince said.

Under the settlement, if the UFW—or, theoretically, another private party—files a heat-illness complaint, Cal/OSHA must investigate the allegations.

Little outlined what happens if the UFW files a Notice of Intent to Take Access and gives a copy to someone in the farm office.

Union representatives have considerable latitude in what they discuss with employees, but they are limited in when during the day they may gain worksite access; they may do so for an hour before and after a shift and for up to an hour during lunch.

Little advised taking steps to maintain some control over, and knowledge of, who is on your property.

"You can put up a gate, and if that's too expensive you can always put up a 'No Trespassing' sign," Little advised. "You need to understand who is on your property and what they are doing there."

(Bob Johnson is a reporter in Davis. He may be contacted at bjohn11135@aol.com.)

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Commentary

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operators of the federal Central Valley Project for releasing water from still-depleted reservoirs in order to make room for potential flood flows. For example, despite the dry spell that hit Northern California in the first two weeks of February, operators of Folsom Lake on the American River increased releases from the lake, the Sacramento Bee reported, "even as the reservoir sat 40 percent empty." According to the Bee, Folsom Lake "spilled enough water to supply the Sacramento region for weeks."

Sacramento-area water districts called for a rethinking of the lake's operating manual, which requires the levels in Folsom to be drawn down when they reach a certain point in mid-February. That manual was revised after the floods of 1986—but hasn't been changed since.

Water users, seeing a lost opportunity to retain more water generated by early-season storms, say those manuals need to be re-examined, because they fail to take advantage of modern forecasting capabilities.

Another aspect of water system operation can become lost in such discussion: the fact that having more places to store water during storm surges would allow operators more flexibility in protecting low-lying areas from floods and in capturing more flows for use during inevitable dry times. Years such as the ones we've just experienced show the continued need for additional water storage. By approving the Proposition 1 water bond in 2014, California voters showed their eagerness to invest in water supply facilities that add flexibility to the water system.

A key change since the floods of 1986 occurred six years later, when Congress passed the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, which combined with the federal Endangered Species Act to change the way CVP reservoirs operate. As reservoir managers have placed more emphasis on benefiting protected fish, additional demands have been placed on the system, further highlighting the need to capture surplus water flows when they're available.

Californians are also paying more attention to groundwater recharge, for example by channeling water onto farmland in pilot projects aimed at replenishing underground aquifers. Drawing water off rivers and streams in times of high flows can benefit both flood control and water supply. Farm Bureau and other organizations are looking for any impediments to such beneficial reoperation of the system, to make sure such impediments are removed, so we can add enhanced groundwater recharge as we add new surface storage.

Looking back at those six stormy days in 1986, and at the 30 years that have followed, shows us the need to heed the lessons Californians should have learned: California precipitation can be extremely variable, and our water system must have the flexibility to move from drought to flood and back again. We must take advantage of improved forecasting and other advancements in technology to operate our system as nimbly as possible—and we must add to our water storage capabilities to help us weather both drought and flood.

(Dave Kranz is manager of the California Farm Bureau Federation Communications/News Division and editor of Ag Alert. He may be contacted at dkranz@cfbf.com.)

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Not Just a Drop In The Bucket: "Drill for Will" Project Reaches New Depths

Trudy Wischemann
Special to the Valley Voice

Five months ago, when Dinuba farmer Paul Buxman collided with the idea of saving fellow farmer Will Scott, Jr. in the middle of the night, conventional wisdom would have found the proposed effort paltry. Just one farm among thousands, Scott's wells were going dry, threatening to end his life as a farmer.

The drought was dragging on, big growers were drilling superdeep wells, pumping hard, and lowering the groundwater table everywhere, with few people protesting and no end in sight. In most people's minds, the handwriting was on the wall for smaller-scale growers, but the lack of response was deafening.

There is nothing conventional about either Buxman or Scott, however. Both men grew up eating black-eyed peas from their mothers' kitchen gardens. Both men farm with Massey-Ferguesson tractors. More important, both men farm with a purpose beyond making money, with passions for community, healthy food and ecological wholeness. Most important, both men farm in covenant with their Maker.

Both men also have a bent for organizing others in the effort to keep people on the land, growing food and being members of their communities. Organizing small family farmers is notoriously difficult, yet both Buxman and Scott have succeeded where others have thrown up their hands in despair. After all, why try to save this increasingly diminishing number of food producers when they are just a drop in the bucket compared to the dynamos of California production agriculture?

"It always comes back to food," Scott said, while hoeing weeds away from the irrigation spigots at the end of rows of old cauliflower and cabbage ready to be plowed under as soon as the clutch on the tractor is fixed. He described how-monocropping patterns have destroyed the soil, diminished human diets, reduced local food supplies and made them less secure. He spoke about the cultural need to have people be more than consumers and renters, described the emptiness he finds in the eyes of our youth who have little prospect of being anything more than that.

The most important thing, he said, is to provide access to healthy food for the people who need it, to get that critical resource where it's going to do some good.

"Without food, man becomes an animal," he said, looking at the ground he had just cultivated. "If we take care of the least of us, everybody else will do well," he said.

It is in the name of food and its more even distribution that Scott farms his 40 acres, growing organic beans and fresh vegetables to sell in the poorer urban farmers' markets, what the Fresno organization Food Commons calls "food deserts." It is in the name of food and good food growers that he started and helps maintain the African-American Farmers of California, where the tiny handful of Black farmers remaining in the Valley find mutual support and marketing aid. It is in the name of food that he started the 16-acre demonstration site to train youths to farm, market and even cook their own food, developing recipes that have already earned a few blue ribbons at the Fresno County Fair.

"The community can't afford to lose this man," Buxman declared five months ago as he launched the fundraising effort to drill deeper wells for Scott.Buxman, who helps support his farming habit by painting beautiful scenes of the Valley's remaining small farmscapes, decided to offer one signed, numbered, backed and wrappedlithograph for every foot deepened in Scott's wells.

Three days after the idea was born, the first check arrived at his door, "priming the pump" for what would become a flood of generosity. By Christmastime, with little more than a few events and church presentations, more than $12,000 had been raised for lowering Scott's wells. After

The Fresno Bee carried an update on the project February 21, another slew of checks arrived, encouraging the realization that people really do care about the fate of this small farmer, and perhaps even small farmers in general.

Arts Visalia is showing Buxman's work at its gallery March 4-25. It has generously agreed to receive contributions for the Drill for Will Project as well as distribute the lithographs. At the opening on Friday, March 4, Buxman will be joined by Scott, as well as many other people who have pitched in to make this fundraising drive succeed.

The opening is from 6-8 pm at the Arts Visalia gallery, 214 E. Oak St.(559) 730-0905. Regular gallery hours are Wednesday-Saturday from noon-5:30 pm.

For more about this project visit, www.drillforwill.blog.com.

HSR Authority Seeks Public Comments

On February 18 The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) today released the Draft 2016 Business Plan, a foundational document for implementing the California High-Speed Rail program that reflects the transition from planning to construction to providing passenger service. Overall capital costs are reduced from $67.6 billion to $64.2 billion. The plan also provides the path forward for the construction and operation of a section of the high-speed rail program, using existing funds, which will generate revenue within the next decade.

"This Draft Business Plan presents a clear path forward within available funding to deliver the system as approved by California voters in 2008," said the Authority's Chief Executive Officer Jeff Morales. "By constructing the line between the Silicon Valley and the Central Valley, while also making significant investments in Southern California's passenger rail systems, high-speed rail service will become a reality in this state in the next 10 years at a lower cost than previously estimated."

This draft plan, which is required by Assembly Bill 528 (Lowenthal, Chapter 237, Statutes of 2013), summarizes the progress made over the last two years, updates available funding and financing, forecasts ridership, and updates risk management information. In this plan, the Authority highlights three objectives to move the high-speed rail program forward.

The first objective is to initiate high-speed rail passenger service as soon as possible in order to bring benefits to California and generate revenues to attract private sector participation. With existing funding and more than 100 miles of active construction in the Central Valley already underway, the Authority will complete the construction of the high-speed rail line between Silicon Valley and Central Valley by 2024, with operations beginning in 2025.

The second objective is to make strategic, concurrent investments throughout the system that will be linked together over time. Investments that connect state, regional and local rail systems, will provide immediate mobility, environmental, economic and community benefits. For example, the Burbank to Anaheim corridor is of regional and statewide significance and is critical to supporting the economy of Southern California. Today's plan proposes join with local partners to improve this corridor, including the highest priority grade separations in the state (Rosecrans Avenue/Marquardt Avenue, the Southern California Regional Interconnection Project) and improvements at Los Angeles Union Station. These and other investments identified in this Draft 2016 Business Plan will increase capacity, improve safety in this highly-congested travel corridor, and improve air quality.

The third objective is to construct additional segments as funding becomes available. This requires completing the environmental analyses for every mile of the program and securing environmental approvals. The Authority will continue to move forward with clearing all project sections between San Francisco and the Los Angeles/Anaheim area by 2017.

With the release of today's draft plan, the Authority is now seeking public comment as part of a 60-day public comment period that will close on April 18, 2016. Comments may be made online, via USPS, and at regularly scheduled board meetings in March and April 2016. Timely comments become a permanent element of the published plan. The Authority is required by Public Utilities Code Section 185033 to prepare, publish, adopt and submit an updated Business Plan to the Legislature on May 1, 2016.

Sheriff Boudreaux: "I am thankful to you, the people of Tulare County"

In my nearly 30 years with the Tulare County Sheriff's Office, I have witnessed some ugly situations which law enforcement faces on a daily basis. Yet somehow, the men and women of our department are able to go home to their own families and not burden them with tales from their last shift.

On February 10, the Tulare County Sheriff's Office lost two of its fine officers in a tragic airplane crash near Springville. In an instant, the men and women of this department felt the loss of their two comrades but continued toperform the duties of their jobs.

From patrolling the community, to investigations, citizen contacts, facing the dangers of domestic violence, and, in this case, flying an airplane to watch over the men and women in uniform and the residents of this county, officers face a variety of scenarios every day.

As the sheriff of Tulare County, I am thankful that we have the trust of our community and a collaborative relationship with our citizens and other lawenforcement agencies.

We continue to work hand in hand with our service groups, our schools, those who are in need, our homeless, our faith-based groups, and for the community as a whole in the pursuit of the common good.

Evidence of this collaborative relationship and community trust became abundantly clear to us the night of February 10.

Our community has embraced the men and women of law enforcement. Hundreds of letters and phone calls were sent to the Sheriff's Office along with countless social media posts online andface-to-face condolences.

Our community trusts and stands behind its law enforcement. I am thankful to you, the people of Tulare County, for your outpouring of support.

I am also thankful to the men and women in law enforcement who lace up their boots every day in the face of unknown dangers to serve the people of our great county. On behalf of the Tulare County Sheriff's Office, I want to thank everyone for your heartfelt condolences as we heal, as we build, and as we strive to move forward in pursuit of keeping our communities safe.

Blessed be the peacekeepers,
Sheriff Mike Boudreaux

Briefly...

TULARE COUNTY FOR HILLARY CLINTON MEETING

The Tulare County for Hillary group will conduct its first meeting Saturday, March 5.

The meeting is open to anyone interesting supporting Hillary Clinton's election campaign and in participating in an array of activities for the primary and general elections. Meeting will begin at 2pm, Saturday, March 5 at 208 W. Main St. in downtown Visalia.

For more information call: 559-372-2126 or email ruben.macareno@yahoo.com.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MEETING

The LWV of TC will meet Tuesday, March 15 at 11:45am in Sue Sa's Club House, 699 W. Center. The study will be on Higher Education. The speaker will be Liz Shields, a member of the LWV of Fresno. Liz has taught at Fresno State's Craig School of Business and served on a State Dept. project in Armenia training business professionals. The League has positions on education for K-12 and Community Colleges but not a position on higher education. The scope of the study will examine access to quality education in California to enable the membership to comment and advocate on policies and legislation. Lunch will be served for $13, including tax and tip. Reservations are required and the public is welcome. Contact Newellgb@hotmail.com or call 732-1251.

KAWEAH DELTA TO HOST MARCH 15 STATEWIDE PATIENT SAFETY SYMPOSIUM

VISALIA – Kaweah Delta Health Care District will host a statewide patient safety symposium on Tuesday, March 15, to help those working in the healthcare industry improve patient care. The event's keynote speaker will be Mark Chassin, M.D., President and Executive Officer of The Joint Commission.

"We've organized this statewide symposium because patient safety truly is one of the top priorities at Kaweah Delta," said Lindsay Mann, Chief Executive Officer of Kaweah Delta Health Care District. "We are always looking for ways to improve and that's precisely why we've invested our time to bring these experts to educate our organization and others throughout the state about how to do best for patients."

The symposium will take place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave., Visalia. Continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Registration cost is $150. Call 624-2595 or 624-2413 or visit www.kaweahdelta.org/patientsafetysymposium.

Participants will gain valuable knowledge and insight into improving patient care in a motivational setting. Expert speakers will address strategies to excel in quality and safety for patients. Speakers also include:

- Diane C. Pinakiewicz, Health Care Consultant and past President of the National Patient Safety Foundation.
- Rory Jaffe, M.D., Executive Director of California Hospital Patient Safety Organization, a division of the Hospital Quality Institute.
- Boris Kalanj, Director, Cultural Care & Patient Experience, Hospital Quality Institute, Sacramento, California.

The Tulare County "Road Dawgz" Law Enforcement and Fire Department returns Saturday, March 5 to take on the Hollywood Hoops at a fundraiser for the Tulare County Peace Officer's Memorial. The Peace Officer's Memorial stands in honor of fallen officers killed in the line of duty.

Doors open at 6 pm at El Diamante High School and the game begins at 7 pm. County representatives include Sheriff Mike Boudreaux and Supervisor Pete Vander Poel.

The Hollywood Hoops is a street-ball entertainment team in the style of play featured at Harlem Globe Trotter's games. The visiting team consists of former Harlem Globe Trotters players and other elite basketball players affiliated with big names such as Kobe Bryant and Lebron James.

Tickets are $7 prior to the game or $10 at the door. El Diamante High School is located on the corner of Whitendale Avenue and Akers Street in Visalia.

GEORGE RUNNER RESPONDS TO LATEST HIGH SPEED RAIL CHANGE OF PLANS

Board of Equalization Vice Chair George Runner today issued the following statement in response to the High Speed Rail Authority's 2016 business plan:

"The High Speed Rail Authority is desperate and wants to lay as much track as possible so that it becomes more difficult to stop the project. The decision to switch construction to the Bay Area amounts to nothing more than kicking the can down the alley. The Tehachapi Mountains won't disappear because the authority decided to change plans.

"As I warned in 2008, this project is now a far cry from what voters narrowly approved. The project is more than twice as expensive as initially promised and has suffered numerous setbacks and delays. This isn't what Californians expected; they clearly deserve another chance to vote on the issue."

PC OFFERING FREE TAX PREP

Porterville College will play host to free, community tax assistance events during the month of March and into April. PC in a partnership with CSET, will bring the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to campus. The program offers free tax help to people who generally make $54,000 or less, persons with disabilities and the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers, including a number of students from Porterville College, provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. VITA will be hosted from 1 to 6 p.m. in the JEC Center (CT 1309) on March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 and April 5.

Attendees must bring the following documents to prepare tax returns: Social Security cards or ITINs for each member of the family, California ID or Driver's License, copy of their 2014 Tax Return (Helpful, but not required), all W-2 forms for each member in the family (No check stubs allowed), all 1099 and 1098 forms for each member in the family, name, Tax Identification Number, address, and phone number of the child and/or dependent care provider for the Child & Dependent Care Credit, name, address, and phone number for landlord to claim CA Renter's Credit, itemizing Deductions: Form 1098 for mortgages, property tax receipts, registrations for every vehicle, medical bills and other expense documentation needed; HUD-1 Settlement Statement for homebuyers bank account and routing number to use for direct deposit of refunds.

Other Requirements include: family income must be below $54,000 a year, both spouses must be present to e-file as Married Filing Jointly, taxpayers itemizing deductions and claiming small business expenses must add up all expenses prior to having their returns prepared, a list of the people on your tax return with health insurance coverage and which months they were covered, Form 1095-A, which was mailed to you if you or anyone on your tax return had coverage through the national or state health insurance marketplace and/or Form 1095-B or 1095-C, which was mailed to you if you had coverage from another source (not everyone with insurance will receive these forms this year).

During the VITA events, JEC Center staff can be located in Library 412.

These events are open to the public and free to attend. Parking permits will not be required. Porterville College is located at 100 East College Avenue in Porterville. For more information visit www.portervillecollege.edu or call (559) 791-2200.

VITA – Porterville College Dates:
Tuesday, 3/1: 1:00 – 6:00 pm
Tuesday, 3/8: 1:00 – 6:00 pm
Tuesday, 3/15: 1:00 – 6:00 pm
Tuesday, 3/22: 1:00 – 6:00 pm
Tuesday, 3/29: 1:00 – 6:00 pm
Tuesday, 4/5: 1:00 – 6:00 pm

ENROLL NOW IN NINE WEEK COURSES STARTING SOON AT WEST HILLS COLLEGE

While the spring semester began at West Hills College almost a month ago, students now have another opportunity to sign up for classes.

In addition to regular, semester length courses, West Hills also offers students the opportunity to take nine-week courses, often called mini-mesters. Students can now sign up for a long list of classes including business, administration of justice, art, computer science, geography, history and much more, with most beginning on March 14 or later.

The mini-mester courses provide the same amount of instruction, and the same number of college credits, as regular 18-week classes. Content is the same and students receive an equal number of college credits for successful completion.

"The nice thing about these later starting sections is that any student has the opportunity to enroll after the primary term begins," said Rita Grogan, Associate Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Institutional Effectiveness. "Therefore, a student who wasn't prepared to start enrollment in late January may still enroll in short-term college courses for spring. Additionally, those students who are already enrolled have the opportunity to add a class (or two) to their spring schedule. This allows students to start their educational and career paths at almost any point in a term."

Courses are available throughout the district at West Hills College Coalinga, West Hills College Lemoore, and North District Center, Firebaugh and online anywhere.

To search for classes with open seats, visit the online course schedule at http://bit.ly/1TWsid8 and search #openseats. The search can then be narrowed down by campus or subject.

For help or more information, contact West Hills College Coalinga's Office of Student Services at (559) 934-2300 or West Hills College Lemoore's Office of Student Services at (559) 925-3317.

YMCA CAMP SEQUOIA LAKE NOW ACCEPTING CAMP REGISTRATION AND JOB APPLICATIONS

YMCA Camp Sequoia Lake, which operates five camps in the Sequoia National Forest, is now accepting camp registrations and job applications online at www.goldenstateymca.org.

The camps at Camp Sequoia Lake are:

- Youth Camp, for youth grades 3 through 9
- Teen Camp, for teens grades 10 through 12
- Music Camp, for youth grades 5 through 12
- Skate Camp, for youth grades 3 through 12
- Counselor in Training Camp, for youth grades 10 through 12
- Leadership in Training Camp, for youth grades 7 through 9

YMCA Camp Sequoia Lake is also accepting applications for jobs includincluding adventure staff, arts and crafts,

Voices of the Valley

Graciela Martinez

Dave Adalian

Graciela Martinez' retirement home sits across a small dirt road from the never-ending stream of traffic that is Highway 99 cutting its way north and south along the backbone of California, eventually through Goshen, that fabled area to the east of Eden.

It's a dark sky-blue house, small, with a pair of arches that cover a stucco porch. It's the same house where her mother lived the last days of her life, one she shares now with her 85-year-old uncle. The home is being remodeled. Concrete flooring is exposed in the living room, a spot where generations of feet have stood to watch the traffic blare past is worn in the linoleum front of the kitchen sink. Outside the sun is shining, and spring is finally making itself felt.

"I just want a place to be," Martinez, 71, said. "I'm doing all right. Between my retirement and Social Security, I'm fine."

Back to Where She Once Belonged

This isn't the retirement home Martinez envisioned for herself. Until recently, she'd been living on a shared piece of property north of Farmersville, a far more rural and idyllic place than this. Staying there became untenable, and she found herself back in a neighborhood where she'd lived once upon a time.

"See that blue house?" she asked, pointing up the dirt road to where it met the asphalt. "I used to live there. I was a business owner here once."

This dusty, noisy neighborhood with its wood-and-wire fences and the smell of the freeway, is a unique place, Martinez says, a culture unto itself, full of people caught between two much larger ways of life. Not accepted into either larger social structure, each new generation makes their own, though she thinks none of them can last.

"I'm a USA-born daughter of parents born in Mexico," she said, pride in her voice apparent. "First generation. We're the ones who became the cholos, you know the zoot suits. It's one generation only, the shortest culture. We're changing. We're evolving."

Her parents lived a life not too dissimilar than the ones they would have known in Mexico, though perhaps with more freedom and greater opportunities for themselves and their children. Not so for Martinez. The life she lived is utterly different than what would have been had her family never come north.

There and Back Again

When she retired two years ago, it was after a career that peaked with her directing the efforts of Proyecto Campesino, a branch of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) tasked with advocating for farm labors and addressing human rights issues. It was a progression that grew naturally from her first job at 19, and it took her down an exciting path.

Martinez attended Redwood High School in Visalia, graduating in 1964. She studied journalism and worked on the school newspaper, which turned out to be important later on.

"Little me, I would go up and talk to these big, handsome football players and those popular cheerleaders," she remembered. "That's where I lost my embarrassment."

Talking to her now, it's hard to imagine she ever had any to lose. She doesn't need it.

College was apparently not an option, and career paths were few for a Latina starting out in the Central Valley. Fortunately, she met Bard McAllister, an organizer for the AFSC who was in Visalia to start Self Help Enterprises, and he hired her to assist in the effort. The program is still at work in the Valley, helping low-income people find housing, education and jobs, and Martinez has served on its board for the last 20 years.

"I'm thinking of getting off," she said.

The Great Society

While working with McAllister, Martinez was selected by the AFSC to go to Selma, Alabama, in March of 1965. There, Dr. Martin Luther King and other civil rights activists were gathering for a march from Selma to the state's capital in Montgomery to protest the death at police hands of a fellow activist.

Protesters stop for the night at a local farm during the 1965 Civil Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, Ala., led by Dr. Martin Luther King. Graciela Martinez, former director of Proyecto Campesino, took part in the march at age 19.

"There were five of us. We traveled in an old station wagon," Martinez said. "That was some experience. Blacks and Mexicans were at odds, but we were so well taken care of."

The night before the protest, the crowd gathered to hear King speak at a local church that was far too small to contain the number of people pressing to get inside.

"That church was packed. It was just a little bit bigger than this house," Martinez recalled. "I made it inside. I feel I breathed the same air [as King]."

King tried to ready them for the hatred they would face during the 54-mile trek over several days.

"He got us prepared.' Stay in line,' he said. 'Don't respond in negative ways,'" Martinez said. "We set out the next morning."

Bloody Sunday

During their first attempt to reach Montgomery on March 7, police and state troopers attacked the nonviolent crowd of protesters, beating them with billy clubs, firing tear gas at them as they tried to enter Dallas County. The incident, now known as Bloody Sunday, saw more than 50 people hospitalized.

"The cops, many were siccing the f***ing dogs on people," Martinez said. "We were pelted with rotten tomatoes and eggs."

Two days later, King would lead the group toward Montgomery again, stopping again at the Dallas County line. This time, King was abiding a court order, waiting for final approval of the court and protection for his people from the federal government. On March 21, the protest would finally cross the Dallas County line, but Martinez wasn't with them.

The night of March 9, a young, White minister, James Reeb, who had come to Alabama to join the march, was beaten to death by a group of segregationists.

"The AFSC got scared. What if I got killed? They told us to come home," Martinez said. "The fire was on and in me already. My mother always told me an injustice to one is an injustice to all."

There was another activist at that march, a man now taking center stage in our national elections, Bernie Sanders. To Martinez, who is a staunch Sanders supporter, it adds another layer of excitement to the memory and brings it starkly into the present moment.

"I might have been on the same march (as Sanders)," she said.

Back in the Valley

By the time Martinez arrived home, Self Help Enterprises was open for business, and she went back to work with McAllister.

"He's the first one who introduced me to Cesar [Chavez]," she said. "He [McAllister] actually went out to work with the farmworkers. He found housing was one of the biggest needs. Some farmworkers were living in little more than chicken coops."

Housing became Self Help's focus, but Martinez's passion led her in another direction, into working with AFSC's Farm Labor Program, which would eventually evolve into Proyecto Campesino. The Proyecto focuses mainly on political organizing and informing immigrants on important issues, such as naturalization, through the media. Outreach funnels immigrants into citizenship classes, where they learn English, civics and US history. Those classes then serve as a recruiting ground for organizations that want to help the newly made citizens' bring their right for redress of grievance to bear on local issues.

Graciela Martinez, former director of Proyecto Campesino, poses with her dog outside her home in Goshen. Martinez retired recently after a career of activism and organizing. Dave Adalian/Valley Voice

"We have to link arms," Martinez said. "That's the only way battles are won."

It was important work for Martinez, but she's glad to be done. It will let her change her focus away from administration and back to action.

"That pulled me away from what I am," she said, "an activist and an organizer."

A Grim Present, A Better Tomorrow

When she looks at the America of 2016, Martinez does not like what she sees.

"Everything is broken," she said.

Our institutions, public and private, have become a system designed to promote failure, she believes.

"Look at our prison system," she said, picking the first issue that came to her mind. "The high, high number of kids, not just kids of Color, who are in the school-to-prison pipeline."

It starts, she says, with the urge of overworked parents, teachers and authorities to control the normal but disruptive behavior of children using drugs and the criminal justice system. This wide, industrialized approach seems to her far too impersonal, and it is, she says, clearly ineffective.

"We just don't take the time," she said.

That is what Martinez plans to do now that retirement is upon her.

"I love to be out among the people," she said. "To love, to share, you know, the real love. We're afraid to say 'I love you' or 'How can I help?'"

Viewpoint

Dark Spots, Light Spots, and Apple's Protest

Mel Gurtov

How's this for bad choices? A recent study by a Harvard group contended with the position of US intelligence agencies that tracking possible terrorists was becoming more difficult because there are too many "dark spots"—places where data can be encrypted to prevent tracking. Harvard "reassured" the FBI, CIA, and others that new technologies embedded in common objects will provide (or already provide) plenty of additional tracking opportunities. What are these? How about toothbrushes, toys (yes, Barbie dolls), television, and light bulbs, just for starters? These are the "Internet of things," in the cute phrase of one law professor quoted in the article above. But let's just call them light spots.

I suppose we are intended to feel comforted by the thought that we're safe on both ends of the surveillance machine—the intelligence community's and the corporations'. Obviously, those of us who are still worrying about how Facebook, Google, and Amazon—the Big Three of Social Monitoring—keep us (and the authorities) in their sights are not thinking ahead. We have already surrendered our privacy to them by signing up every day for their services, and by standing by while they willy-nilly transfer data to government agencies.

Europe's national regulators, as distinct from the European Commission, suspect that the latest US-EU "Privacy Shield" agreement on personal data transfer does not adequately safeguard privacy. All 28 EU member-states must sign off on the agreement for it to take effect. They want assurances that Europeans' private information will not find its way into the hands of US intelligence services. I doubt the Big Three will provide them. And if they do, who would believe them?

Like most Europeans, Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, believes that some dark spots deserve protection. Reminding us that we the consumer are "the product" and not really the customer when it comes to tracking of our likes and dislikes by Facebook et al., Cook has emerged as a stout defender of privacy against the demands of the FBI in the San Bernardino terrorism case. He so far has rejected the US government's demand, backed by a court decision, to unlock Apple smart phones in order to access one terrorist's data. Correctly, Cook sees surrendering to this request as having the potential to open the floodgates, allowing either the government or criminals to gain backdoor entry to people's private information. Cynics might say that he really wants to protect Apple's proprietary encryption software, which evidently is much stronger than Google's and the other giants'. And clearly, Cook is concerned about the integrity of the Apple brand. But motives aside, Cook's action is laudable.

Interestingly, Cook's impassioned defense of privacy has detractors and fence-sitters in the high-tech community. Everyone among them want to protect their security systems. But those companies which, like the Big Three, rely on Internet advertising and personal data entries to monitor tastes and movements will be loath to support Cook's tough stand—all the more so if they have contracts with police departments and federal agencies, such as Amazon's with the CIA and Microsoft's with the Department of Defense. But those which, like Apple, mainly sell hardware are likely to support him.

In the end, Apple may have to concede at least to providing the specific data the FBI is demanding. But let's not lose sight of the core issue. We're all in a bitter struggle to preserve our freedom of thought and movement against the rising tide of security-firsters who will forever contend that sacrificing our privacy is necessary if we are to erase the dark spots. By their logic, 1984 is finally here, and embedding security (i.e., surveillance) chips in toothbrushes, children's toys, and everywhere else The Enemy might lurk is both necessary and proper. You'd better consider flossing regularly and having your kids play with sticks and stones. Barbie is watching, and even Tim Cook can't stop her.

Bernie Sanders: The 2016 Peace Candidate

Lawrence S. Wittner

On February 10, 2016, Peace Action—the largest peace organization in the United States—announced its endorsement of Bernie Sanders for the Democratic nomination for President.

Peace Action is the descendant of two other mass U.S. peace organizations: the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign (the Freeze). SANE was founded in 1957 with the goal of ending nuclear weapons testing. Soon, though, it broadened its agenda to include opposing the Vietnam War and other overseas military intervention, reducing military spending, and backing nuclear disarmament treaties, as well as supporting economic conversion from military to civilian production. Among SANE's early supporters were Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., Walter Reuther, and Dr. Benjamin Spock. The Freeze, initiated by Randy Forsberg, appeared in the late 1970s and reached a peak in the first half of the 1980s, when it led a widespread campaign to halt the Reagan administration's dramatic nuclear weapons buildup and the dangerous slide toward nuclear war. With much in common, SANE and the Freeze merged in 1987 to form Peace Action. Like its predecessors, Peace Action devoted its efforts to building a more peaceful world.

Although the three peace organizations rarely endorsed Presidential candidates, they did so on occasion. Appalled by the Vietnam War, SANE backed the peace campaigns of Eugene McCarthy in 1968 and George McGovern in 1972. In 1984, challenging the Reagan administration's bellicose approach to international affairs, SANE and the Freeze endorsed Walter Mondale. Then, in 1992, fed up with twelve years of Republican hawkishness, the newly combined organization threw its support behind Bill Clinton.

In its statement endorsing Bernie Sanders, Peace Action praised his opposition to both Iraq wars, support of legislation to reduce spending on nuclear weapons, strong backing of the Iran agreement, votes to curb military spending, and championing of diplomacy over war. According to Kevin Martin, the executive director of the peace organization, Sanders "best represents the values that Peace Action and its 200,000 supporters have espoused." And, in fact, before Peace Action's board of directors voted overwhelmingly to have the organization's Peace PAC back the Sanders campaign, an online poll of Peace Action's members revealed support for endorsement by 85 percent of the respondents.

This enthusiasm for Sanders among peace activists reflects other aspects of his record, as well. The U.S. Senator from Vermont has opposed NATO expansion into Eastern Europe, favored normalization of relations with Iran, and decried the Israeli attacks on Gaza in 2014 as "disproportionate" and "completely unacceptable." When it comes to the war in Syria, he has opposed the establishment of a "no-fly zone" and the use of American ground troops. In a July 2015 interview, Sanders explained that, although he is not a pacifist, he believes that "war is the very, very, very last option."

Sanders' depiction as a peace candidate has inspired some grumbling. During the Presidential race, he has shied away from foreign and military policy issues, and this has disappointed some peace activists. Hard-line leftists, already irked by his benign brand of socialism, have been particularly critical. A writer in the Socialist Worker denounced Sanders' "backing of U.S. imperialism," while another, in Jacobin, charged that he was "willfully blind to the hand-in-glove relationship between capitalism and militarism."

Even so, when it comes to mainstream electoral politics, Sanders is a logical choice for peace activists. Although it's true that he has focused his campaign on economic inequality within the United States, he has not hesitated to assail the "military-industrial complex," as well as the "regime change" policies of past U.S. administrations. Also, the attacks upon him by leftwing purists are often divorced from reality. Driven by a sectarian mindset and a fierce hatred of the Democratic Party, these firebrands distort or ignore much of his peace-oriented record. Furthermore, they overlook the unpleasant alternatives to a Sanders presidency: a hawkish Hillary Clinton or a rabidly militaristic Republican in the White House.

A more serious question is whether American voters, in 2016, will respond positively to a peace candidate. Although the answer remains unclear, there are some indications that they will. Opinion polls reveal that most Americans do not support increasing the U.S. military budget, are wary of sending U.S. ground troops into another Mideast war, and back recent agreements that ease tensions with "enemy" nations like Iran and Cuba. Therefore, campaigning as a peace candidate might end up producing benefits for Bernie Sanders at the ballot box.

"The Past 40 Years Have Brought Us To This Very Moment"

I can't say that I'm surprised that Trump will likely be the RNC nominee and may even become president. What surprises me is how people just don't understand this phenomenon. It's melancholy to me watching people flip out about him on the interwebs. They just don't get it.

Frankly, our society doesn't place much value in morals and ethics. We care foremost about money, power, and sensationalism (aka bread and circuses). Very abstract values that do the least to affect our immediate world. We can see this in action by observing the news. Until recently, Trump had more than 75% of the media coverage for the republican side. The antithesis of Trump, Sanders, who built his platform on socioeconomic health and populism, had 23 times less coverage than Trump in December. The treatment by the media of these candidates very much is a product of our obsession with drama— celebrity and reality tv, sound bites and sensationalism— and demonstrates how we value shock and awe over pragmatic social needs. News outlets know what sells and they push it. Whereas they give the Donald free advertising.. little need to ask for corporate and political donations when the media clamors for interviews and every little soundbite in order to boost ratings, giving him millions upon millions of dollars in free advertising.

Even though every mainstream media outlet is culpable of this, they are only tapping into what works in this society. The consumer is just as guilty, regurgitating the sensationalism, with reactions and likes and in general being obsessed with cult of personality (I didn't miss the irony that I am doing this very thing with this post). Trump is not far from wrong when he says he can do whatever he wants, such as shoot a man on 5th avenue New York, because people eat that s**t up, even if they hate it. If it makes us uncomfortable we can always turn to the Oscars or keep up with the Kardashians or browse Instagram. And even responding in hate.. that the Donald is an idiot or his followers idiots or he's this or that.. even well written high-brow satires by the likes of John Oliver, only perpetuate his brand, and surreptitiously influence the populace in subliminal ways.

Furthermore, the distrust of our government and the facade of the media has developed an adamant stubbornness that only galvanizes Trump supporters. The logic goes, if everyone, especially the establishment, is against Trump, he must be a true threat to the very society that we see as corrupt. Regardless of what he says, he has my vote they say, because our evil government hates him. A friend of the enemy and so on. Ironically, a not-too-dissimilar viewpoint is held with most of the Bernie-base, but the allusions of big government in Sander's socialist agenda incite more suspicion than hope with the Trumpettes— they'd rather root for the despotic business mogul "telling it like it is." More so, the miasma of apathy has increased so much that people really don't believe they can effect change, not least have a politician in a perceived rigged system effect it. So screwball cowboys who work outside of the system suddenly seem much more likeable, because really, what's the point?

Therefore I cannot wonder how a person like Trump has already risen to such prominence, because the past 40 years have in fact brought us to this very moment, clearly and unapologetically— An obsession with the celebrity cult of personality, the disingenuous neo-liberal and ultra-conservative policies (which at this point are indistinguishable), and money becoming the new God of our society.

Eric Wright

Viewpoint

Opening Statement of Chairman Devin Nunes House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence — Hearing on Worldwide Threats

Chairman Nunes: The committee will come to order. Today, the committee will examine worldwide threats. I would like to welcome our witnesses: Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency John Brennan, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation James Comey, Deputy Director of the National Security Agency Richard Ledgett, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart, and Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Nicholas Rasmussen. Thank you all for being here today.

I recognize the challenges associated with discussing sensitive national security issues in public, but I hope you agree that this open forum is critical to help explain to the American people the serious threats that we face, and also to highlight the efforts of the brave men and women of the Intelligence Community to keep us safe. I speak for the entire committee when I say thank you for your service, sacrifice, and dedication. Director Clapper, as this is your last worldwide threats hearing with this committee, I'd like to specifically thank you for 55 years of service to this great nation.

Director Clapper, I recall from last year's testimony that you were concerned about a vast array of threats. Remarkably, the number seems to have grown since then. Generally, I share your assessment of the current threat environment. The truth is, the United States today faces the highest threat level since the 9/11 attacks. The American people don't need a security clearance to understand the threats now facing the Western world; they only need to read the headlines out of Paris, Brussels, San Bernardino, and Boston. Al-Qa'ida, ISIS, and other terror groups are expanding rapidly, with more access to safe havens, recruits, and resources than ever before. Without U.S. leadership, this trend will continue.

We have discussed Syria and Iraq with you at length in closed and open sessions. I believe the U.S. response to those conflicts is among the most mismanaged foreign policy blunders in recent history. After consistently failing to block ISIS's expansion, we have to accept a new reality; ISIS is now in dozens of countries and has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to reach our homeland. Instead of focusing on ISIS as if it were confined to Iraq and Syria, we urgently need an aggressive, comprehensive, anti-terror strategy that stretches from Morocco to Southeast Asia.

At the same time, our adversaries are becoming more diverse. Throughout the next decade, the U.S. must be prepared to check Chinese ambition in Asia, counter a resurgent Russia, defend against cyber threats, and manage delicate geopolitical forces in the Middle East, including the growing schism between Sunni and Shia Muslims. How does the President respond to these enormous challenges? His hallmark policy has been to strike a nuclear deal with Iran that greatly relieves pressure on the Iranian regime – the world's biggest state sponsor of terrorism. He also failed to prevent Russia from propping up Syrian dictator Bashar Assad – a man whom the President himself has insisted must surrender power. Meanwhile, some of our closest allies in fighting terrorism – the Kurds, the Israelis, and the Egyptians – often find their concerns downplayed or dismissed within this administration. Our partners around the world want to work with us, but they can't rally behind American leadership if they don't understand what our foreign policy is trying to accomplish.

Although I disagree with the President's policies, the committee will continue to provide the Intelligence Community with the resources it needs to protect the nation, with particular emphasis this year on preserving capabilities for the next President. Because the Intelligence Community is being stretched thin and is overwhelmed by a complex threat matrix, we must prioritize investments throughout the entire Intelligence Community.

Our committee's mission is clear: to help the Intelligence Community to protect the American people by providing oversight, direction, and resources to enable effective, efficient, and constitutional intelligence activities. Additionally, amid the growing threats we face, it is critically important that we ensure that the Intelligence Community act as a careful steward of taxpayer dollars.

Over the next several years, our committee will focus on making progress in the following key areas:

1. Encouraging efficient investment in areas such as space in which complex program and capability requirements routinely drive up costs, and adopting new technology, including data analytics, encryption, and technical training, specifically in community-wide projects like cloud computing, data security, and tool management.

2. Reassessing the effectiveness of the community's human intelligence enterprise and synchronizing community-wide resources, especially at a time when several Intelligence Community agencies are implementing reorganization plans. This particularly applies to the recruitment and training of the next generation of collectors, cyber experts, and analysts to operate in nontraditional areas and deliver intelligence on hard-to-reach targets.

3. Producing objective and unbiased intelligence analysis, particularly in the Department of Defense, where there is a multi-committee effort to determine whether there are systemic problems across the intelligence enterprise in CENTCOM or any other pertinent intelligence organizations. In this context, it is vital that this committee protect and seriously consider the testimony of the many whistleblowers who provide information to us. For example, we have been made aware that both files and emails have been deleted by personnel at CENTCOM, and we expect that the Department of Defense will provide these and all other relevant documents to the committee.

4. Improving the efficiency of intelligence support to the Combatant Commands, including efforts to curb facilities and personnel costs. It's alarming that this committee identified up to $50 million in annual savings for the Defense Intelligence Agency and more than $300 million in new, unneeded construction disguised as base consolidation. In total, this was $1.5 billion in savings for one project. The response we've received from the administration can only be described as delay, denial, and deception. This has led the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, the Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Committee, and me to ask the Government Accountability Office to conduct a full investigation. Furthermore, whistleblowers have provided this committee with documentation showing that the Department of Defense has provided false information to Congress. This committee will now conduct another round of interviews and will turn over our findings to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, which already has an ongoing investigation into the matter, and to the Department of Defense Inspector General. Finally, we've asked for data on all intelligence personnel and major support contractors at the Combatant Commands. This request was made in December, and this is information that should be readily available. Informants have made the committee aware that basing decisions, at significant cost to the taxpayer, are being determined in order to maximize the pay and benefits of small groups of individuals. This includes both Department of Defense civilians and contractors. This brings into question hundreds of millions of dollars of contracts that are being awarded annually.

5. Mitigating cyber threats and improving cyber defense in light of the rapid pace of technological change. To address these problems, this committee helped pass the Cybersecurity Act of 2015, while the Director of National Intelligence is establishing the Cyber Threat Intelligence Information Center. We need to ensure that the new law is implemented properly and that the new center operates effectively. Additionally, the latest challenges the government has met in gaining access to an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino terrorists is emblematic of the growing problem posed by encryption. Finally, we need to educate Members of Congress on the importance of reauthorizing section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

I look forward to hearing what the witnesses have to contribute on these five areas. And with that, I would like to recognize the Ranking Member for any comments he would like to make.

Lost Farming Opportunities

Some call it Lost Water... I call it WASTED WATER

I thought you should know... the last two years have been very dry, but the regulatory constraints imposed by the biological opinions have made the water supply crisis even worse.

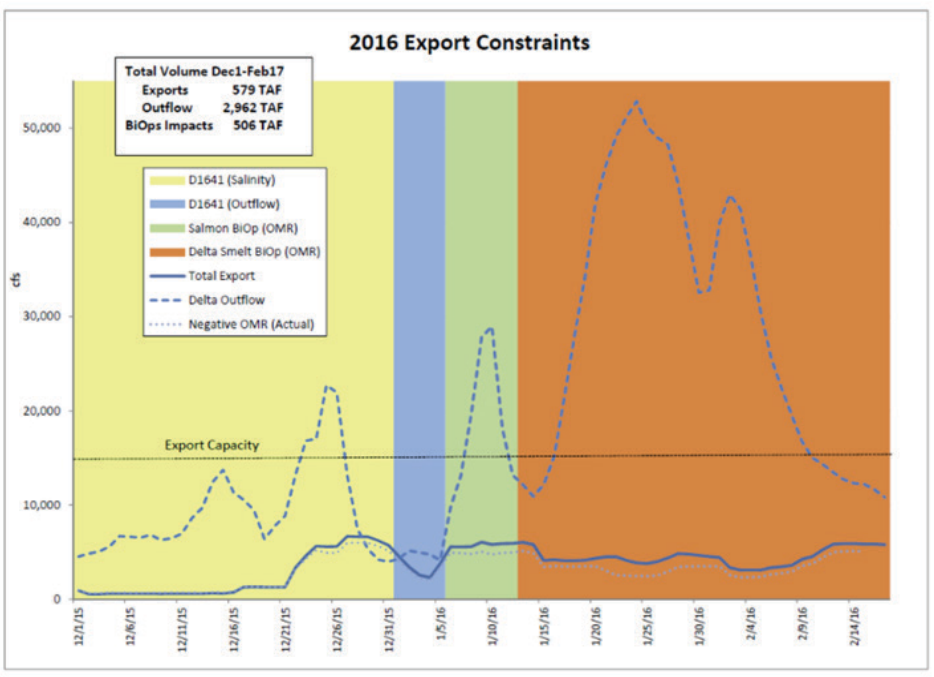
Despite the much needed rainfall and the snowpack, which in some regions has caused flooding and property damage, more than 500,000 acre-feet of water has been released out to the ocean... uncaptured, unused, and gone forever.

To put that into perspective... that's more than ONE AND A HALF TRILLION GALLONS of water.

This chart below illustrates the absurdity of this failed policy that flushes fresh water while urban communities and farmers continue to suffer-- especially farmers and farmworkers who are facing a third consecutive year of ZERO allocation.

When water is not pumped into reservoirs and the weather warms, people throughout the state will question the wisdom of wasting millions of gallons of water.

Johnny Amaral
Deputy General Manager, External Affairs
Westlands Water District



Comments & Letters

Response to Mathis & Political Fix

Hello Valley Voice,

I am completely behind you and your thorough examination of the Mathis triple-dipping issue. Great and BRAVE job ! BUT, as hard-core as you seem with your lefty politics I get concerned that your ethics are just along party lines.

Not being a Trump fan, I still make the connection with the anger and frustration with the corruption of both parties by monopoly power held by unions and others teaming with raw government control. In your Political Fix (NOT) column you again fail to make that connection. Freddie and Fanny and "Too big to fail" aren't "laissez-faire economics". Is a country too big to fail ? Rediculous ! Nothing but a slogan rationalizing business as usual. Freddie and Fannie are back. Just like the perverse incentive to buy a house one cannot afford a second bubble has been created in college education by the inflation of "easy money". There is a third bubble now being created in the energy field by more government subsidies. Your disability investigation is the tip of the iceberg. Over 70% of union prison staff go out on disability. It has just been reported that 2,777 Veteran Administration staff, in the last year, have been out on paid leave costing millions in Vet. care. A, so-called, Baptist organization took in 12,000 of the youth that stormed our southern border and they have been paid $86,000 per child. I'm afraid we're all Socialists now, to some degree, in our belief that Government needs to be involved in our compassion (church) work.

Stephen Crigler

Remove Benches, Picnic Tables from Oval Park

Whereas the picnic tables are well known and proven "hiding in plain sight" locations for criminal enterprises i.e. Gambling, drinking, drug dealing, prostitution via pimp locations,

Whereas the benches are convienent illegal alcohol drinking sitting devices.

Whereas other Visalia parks when faced with exactly the same conditions caused by these attractive criminal and disorder nuisances have eliminated them.

Whereas drug dealers need "people groups camouflage" to hide their nefarious business.

Whereas Oval Park has been in fifty plus year battle for the most basic elements of order and safety.

Whereas moms and families should be the first and foremost priority of any cities responsibility and any and every parks basic goal.

I am proposing for the North Visalia Committee hear comment and then advise City Council/Citizen Advisory Committee for the immediate removal of said sitting devices throughout Oval Park.

This includes but is not eliminated to: four benches, four picnic tables, and four Gazebo benches in Oval Park.

BACKGROUND: Recently Garden Plaza downtown was over run with persons causing many issues both of disorder and crime. All benches were removed. Jefferson Park had huge crime issues, benches removed. Alejandro Ruiz park had crime issues, benches removed and on and on.

This is a fairness issue.

Action requested. Committee to hear city staff, police input and comment, review, agreement or rebuttal of said proposal.

Committee, after proper hearing, to have vote with yes or no on advising City council/Citizen Advisory Committee to seek action on this request.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Bill Huott .....Clean is less Mean
Take back Oval Park

Measure R Update

As chairman of the Tulare County Association of Counties, (TCAG), it gives me great pleasure to update you on the success of Measure R and an event that was recently held to celebrate. On January 28th the fifth annual Local Motion Awards luncheon was held at the Visalia Convention Center with all county and city agencies represented. Projects and individuals were recognized for their contribution to transportation here in Tulare County. Using Measure R funding as seed and match funding, we completed one billion dollars in road and transportation projects which is a major cause for celebration. Cartmill interchange in the city of Tulare was the project that put us over the top

Without exception every city and community in Tulare County has benefited because of Measure R. A few of the projects recognized were

1. SR-99/Cartmill Interchange - Tulare
2. Modoc Ditch Trail - Visalia
3. Widening of SR-99 - Kingsburg to Caldwell Ave in Visalia
4. Bardsley Avenue grade Separation - Tulare
5. Plano Street Bridge - Porterville

Individuals were also recognized for the major rolls they play in making these projects happen:

1. Congressman Devin Nunes
2. Mayor Rudy Mendoza, City of Woodlake
3. Caltrans employee John Liu

Another high point to mention here is that in the past seven years the number of riders on buses has increased overall by more than 60%. Buses serving citizens in the unincorporated areas of the county have increased ridership by over 200%.

A lot of planning goes into making the best of our Measure R funding. Without partners like CALTRANS and the FHWA none of this would be possible.

As we press forward towards the next billion dollars in road projects we know there will be obstacles along the way. The Governor and State legislators diverted millions of transportation dollars to their general fund in 2011, best known as the "triple flip". There are currently efforts underway by the Governor and some State legislators that would favor ports and metropolitan areas in California. This would leave the rest of us in the San Joaquin Valley and rural counties to compete for the left over scraps of funding. We are working closely with local state elected officials pointing out the negative impacts this will have on our projects, many of which are well on the way to construction. This could mean delaying road construction projects for three to five years and in some cases until an unknown future.

Please know that we are working on these issues. I also want to thank our staff here at TCAG. They are dedicated individuals working as a team each day insuring that we get the most out of every dollar. Gratitude also goes out to the voters here in Tulare County who supported Measure R in 2006. Without Measure R we might not have reason to celebrate such success.

Phil Cox, Chairman
Tulare County Association of Governments

"Economics is one of those subjects, like the Bible, that has so much complexity that it is essentially a Rorschach test to listen to others talk about it.

And it it funny to watch the haters flop about like a flounder as they try to pin economic trouble on Obama and pretend that 2008 never happened.

Presidents don't really have that much control over the economy.

The haters try to pretend that gas lines and stagflation never happened before Carter, but all one has to do is google "Whip Inflation Now" for the truth.

The economic turmoil of the 1970's was most directly attributable to Nixon withdrawing from the Bretton Woods Agreement (no choice-he had to) and Arab nation anger over US support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War of 1973,"

— ***Saul Travers** on **Political Fix (18 February, 2016)***

Veteran's Corner

Honor a Hero, Hire a Vet Job and Resource Fair on April 21 at West Hills College Lemoore

Joe Wright

Mark Your Calendars! The Kings County Veterans Employment Committee is once again hosting a Job and Resource Fair for veterans, military, National Guard, reservists, and their dependents and survivors. This year's Fair will be held on April 21, 2016 at West Hills College in Lemoore and will run from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The event is a rare opportunity to meet with employers who are ready to hire, and public and private agencies eager to help with training and other services. In one easy location, veterans will learn about the variety of options available to them, including career, training and education opportunities.

Whether you are a veteran seeking a new career or are looking for a first job since returning from the military, you are invited to attend. Bring copies of your resume. If you don't have one, there will be assistance available in putting one together. Veterans possess a wide variety of outstanding qualities including experience, maturity, leadership, and loyalty making them ideal candidates for job openings. Employers and resource providers can contact Luis Sandoval at (559) 585-3553 or by email at luis.sandoval@edd.ca.gov for more information. The fair is free and open to all.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license.

We can also issue Veteran ID cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents.

To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com/vets.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559)852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

Woodlake FFA Donkey Basketball

Kiara Benavides

On February 26, 2016, Woodlake FFA hosted a donkey basketball game against hometown rival, Exeter FFA. Donkey Basketball has been a tradition for both Woodlake and Exeter that has faded over the past years.

The bringing back of this event created excitement and anticipation for not only members, but the community as well. It is also a tradition that many community members have never experienced, thus creating an opportunity for them to have a great time for it was their first time ever observing the unique and hilarious game.

And as stated by a parent of a participant of the game, "It was amazing! I didn't know what to expect of a Donkey Basketball Game. The outcome was hilarious! I enjoyed myself".

It also gave FFA members an opportunity to get involved with their chapter and to be a part of the unique tradition that the two chapters have brought back. In the end, Exeter won the intense game, 5-4.

Going along with the game, Woodlake FFA has also brought yet another tradition back, FFA Sweetheart Princess. During FFA Week, Sweetheart nominees participated in a series of competitions and competed for the title of Sweetheart Princess.

During halftime, suspense built as Sweetheart titles were announced. Third runner up was won by junior Alexis Brogan, second runner up won by junior Lacey Patrick, first runner up won by Marcela Arambula, and the winner of the crown was myself. Overall it was a successful night full of surely made memories as both traditions were brought back to the two chapters.

Woodies in the Valley Event Scheduled for March 11-13

Staff Reports

The Central Valley Woodie Club chapter of the National Woodie Club has announced its upcoming 10th annual *Woodies in the Valley* event for March 11-13, in Visalia.

Although other participant-only events are scheduled, the main event will be its 'Show 'n Shine' which takes place on the front lawn of Redwood High School Saturday, March 12. This all-woodies car show will be open to the public free of charge from 8:30am until 1:30pm. All woodie and car enthusiasts are encouraged to attend.

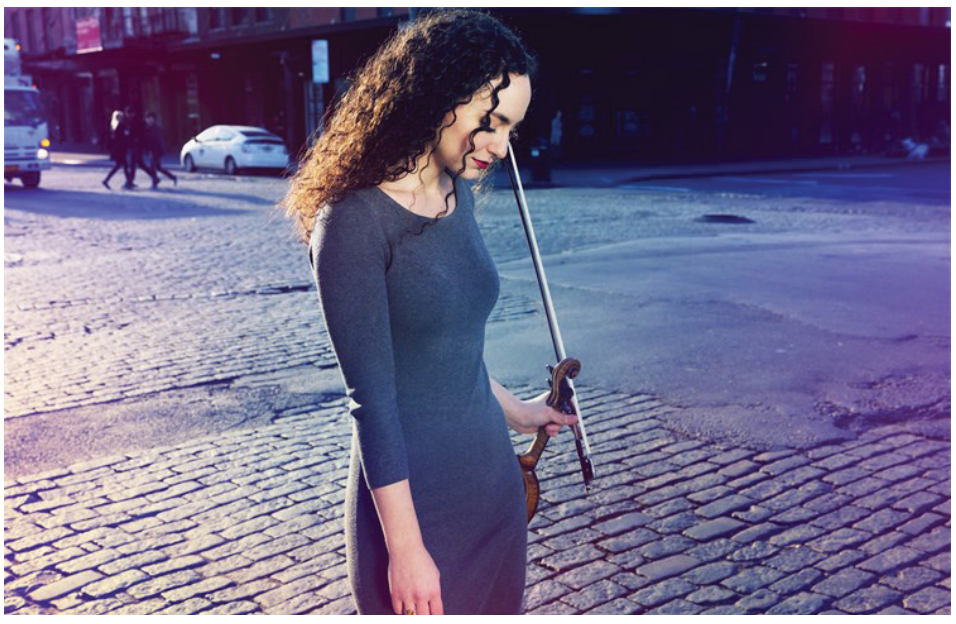
"You will see a good sampling of woodies from 1928-1951, including original, restored, and full hot-rod woodies," said Wayne Yada, club president. "It will be a lot of fun . . . and very nostalgic."

Yada continued, "There are not a lot of woodies left in the country – let alone in the Valley, so 10 years ago when we came up with the idea of having a show here, we knew that we would have to somehow convince woodie owners from California coastal areas (both north and south) – to come and join us. Fortunately, we have been able to do just that. Our first show attracted 20 woodies, and has grown steadily since. Last year we had a record 74 participants from all over the state, and expect to break that record this year."

Several of the woodies will also be participating in the downtown St. Patrick's Day Parade on Main St, starting at 10am.

For more information and pictures from previous events, log into the club's website: www.valleywoodies.com or call 559-967-1357.

Valley Voice
Valley Scene
3 March, 2016



Violin Virtuoso Francesca dePasquale Performs Two Concerts March 12 & 13

Bill Haxton

Francesca dePasquale is one of those rare musicians for whom the term 'artist' really means something. There is something poetic in her gift of expression with bow and string that brings you to an elevated place in yourself, a place that is strangely thrilling yet tranquil, a place where you want to linger, to surrender to that magical sound, wondering "how on Earth does she do that?"

That's probably an unanswerable question, even for her. She says "It's just how I feel the music." But there's a lot more to it than that. It takes immense dedication and thousands and thousands of hours of practice to bring that glorious technique into full synchrony with such deep and passionate feeling.

One prominent reviewer had this to say about her, "Magnificent intonation, gorgeous control of dynamics and a big gutsy sound that soared and whispered and completely won us over. Her lovely shaping of melodies in the slow movement was creamy smooth and utterly natural. The climax of the movement gave me goose bumps. The last movement was a knockout and earned her a prolonged standing ovation."

Another reviewer called her performance, "scintillating."

Without question dePasquale is destined for greatness. No, she may already be there. At age 26, she teaches at Juilliard with violin legend Itzhak Perlman, is on the faculties of the renowned Heifetz Institute for the Exceptionally Gifted and the Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts and in 2015 she won the Classical Recording Foundation Young Artist of the Year award. If that isn't enough, she is currently the recipient of the national Leonore Annenberg Career Fellowship for the Performing Arts.

As accomplished as dePasquale is as a musician, she is equally generous as a human being. In addition to presenting two concerts - Saturday evening in Three Rivers and Sunday afternoon in Visalia-- she will visit local schools and will perform for 300 students from the ProYouth Heart program.

The Three Rivers performance will be held on Saturday, March 12 at 7 pm at the Community Presbyterian Church, 43410 Sierra Drive; in Visalia, the performance will be Sunday, March 13 at 4pm in the Main Street Theater, 307 E. Main Street.

Tickets are $12, available at the door. Children and students admitted free. Adult accompanying a child also admitted free.

Sponsors for dePasquale are Stan Johnson of Three Rivers and the Rotary Club of Visalia.

COS Brings Home Top Honors from Kennedy Center / American College Theatre Festival

Staff Reports

College of the Sequoias Theatre Arts students recently brought home top honors from the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival. From February 9-16 of this year, 32 COS Theatre Arts students attended the 48th Annual Regional Festival in Honolulu, where they enjoyed a variety of activities, including workshops, symposia and regional-level award programs, hosted by the University of Hawaii and Chaminade University.

The Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival is the only year-round program in the United States dedicated to the training and advancement of theatre training at the college level. College of the Sequoias is a proud participant in Region VIII, which includes schools from California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Hawaii and Guam. In addition to the learning and training COS Theatre Arts students received during the event, several students brought home individual honors and awards.

Eleven nominees and their partners represented COS in the preliminary round of the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Competition, going up against more than 300 partnered teams from schools throughout the region. COS Theatre Student Christopher Dorado and partner, Brittney Burris, were one of only 32 teams selected to advance to the semi-final round and ultimately competed in the final round, performing before an audience of more than 1,100 people.

Out of the hundreds of students who participated in the Next Step Auditions, COS student Becka Cole, was honored with a $1,000 scholarship to attend California State University Summer Arts, an opportunity for students to participate in workshops with top industry professionals.Cole will be participating in the Art of the Sword workshop this summer, focusing on stage combat.

Two COS students, Cheyenne Breshears and Madeline Evans, auditioned for and were cast in a 'devised performance,' working with students from other schools to conceive, rehearse and perform an entirely original one-act play in less than 48 hours. Their production was awarded with top honors.

Finally, COS' own Rebekah Robles and Caleb Robbins were selected from dozens of students to compete in the Musical Theatre Initiative, in which young singers workshopped solo pieces with James Gray, a top Broadway director/choreographer, and then perform for all of the attendees. Her incredible rendition of, "I Can Do Better Than That," from "The Last Five Years," earned her the honor of co-representing all of Region VIII at the National Festival at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC this April.

COS Theatre Arts students attended the 48th Annual Regional Festival in Honolulu.

Tulare County Symphony Features Local Musicians on March 19

Donna Orozco

The Tulare County Symphony's March 19 concert is called Locals Night and features solos by orchestra members—concertmaster Susan Doering, principal trumpeter Cooper Walden, and co-principal percussionist Michael Downing.

Michael Downing

Doering said she was thrilled when music director Bruce Kiesling asked her to play Monti's "Czardas" for the concert.

"It's a fun show piece, with great expression and freedom in the slow melancholic first section and wonderful exuberant virtuosity in the faster section," she said.

Walden will play Haydn's "Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra." He calls it the most famous and often performed trumpet concerto.

Cooper Walden

"There aren't a lot of opportunities here in the Valley to hear the piece live and it's such an idiomatically 'trumpet' piece that everyone loves," he said.

Downing says Ewazen's "Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra" is one of the most exciting for both the audience and the performer.

"The concerto as a whole is stunning," he said."It is highly energetic and places the highest demand on the performer."

Susan Doering

The final piece in the concert is Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 5," which stands as one of the composer's most loved large-scale creations.

The concert begins at 7:30 pm at the Visalia Fox Theatre. The audience is invited to come at 6:45 pm to hear Kiesling's preview.

Tickets are $30 to $39.50 at the symphony office, 208 W. Main Street, Suite D, Visalia, downstairs in Montgomery Square. Student prices are $10. Tickets are also available at 732-8600, or visit www.tularecountysymphony.com.

Porterville CHAP Talk Celebrates Library Ladies in March

Staff Reports

The Porterville College's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP) will continue its spring schedule with "Damn Hard Work: The Women of Early California Libraries" from 7-8pm on Friday, March 4 in the PC Theater, presented by Dr. Cindy Mediavilla, Library Programs consultant California State Library and lecturer UCLA Department of Information Studies.

Dr. Cindy Mediavilla

At the turn of the 20th century, large California cities like San Francisco, San Jose, Sacramento and Los Angeles, offered their residents what was already considered traditional public library services. In rural parts of the state, however, very few people had access to library services and so local county librarians often had to carry books—by horseback, mule and on foot—to readers who lived in the mountains and back country.

These women are still greatly admired today for their stamina and undying "missionary zeal" in bringing books to their communities. The audience will learn about these amazing women and the legacy they left behind. The talk is open to the public and free to attend. Parking permits will not be required for this event.

Look for more CHAP presentations coming up throughout the spring.

The Porterville College Cultural and Historical Awareness Program (CHAP) was organized in 2002 to enhance students' awareness of certain important aspects of our society to which they may previously have had little or no exposure. A theme is chosen by CHAP members each school year, and faculty members across the campus are encouraged to integrate elements of that theme into their coursework. Additionally, a variety of field trips, guest speakers, panel discussions and videos are presented throughout the year and are all open to the public. For more information about CHAP call Dr. Robert Simpkins at (559) 791-2464.

Porterville College is located at 100 E. College Avenue in Porterville. For more information visit www.portervillecollege.edu or call (559) 791-2200.

COS Cultural Historical Awareness Program Presents Stephen Fallon

Staff Reports

College of the Sequoias through its Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP) is proud to present University of Notre Dame professor Stephen Fallon on "Freedom of Thought and Expression: The Case of John Milton." This March 9 event will take place at the Visalia COS campus, Ponderosa Lecture Hall, starting at 6pm.

CHAP events are free and open to the public. Parking is free during the event.

This lecture will explore Milton's advocacy of freedom, especially in "Paradise Lost," which shows Adam and Eve enjoying, forfeiting and then regaining freedom. The poem reveals Satan to be the epitome of both the tyrant and the tyrannized, one who is, "not free, but to [him]self enthralled."

A great English poet, Milton was a staunch advocate of political, intellectual, and religious freedom and an implacable foe of tyranny. His understanding of freedom, however, is instructively different from that common today. Milton viewed freedom less as the absence of external constraints and more as the achievement and reward of virtue. He labored, in his own words, to "advance the cause of true and substantial liberty, which must be sought, not without, but within, and which is best achieved, not by the sword, but by a life … rightly conducted."

Professor Fallon is Cavanaugh Professor of the Humanities at Notre Dame. Author of "Milton among the Philosophers" and "Milton's Peculiar Grace: Self-representation and Authority," and co-editor of Milton's Complete Poetry and Essential Prose" (Modern Library). He is past president of the Milton Society of America and holder of its lifetime achievement award. He has been a visiting professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Queensland, Australia.

For more information on this event, please contact Professor Joseph Teller, (559) 730-3924 or josepht@cos.edu.

Education

Great Conversations

Samson and Questions of Belief

Joseph R. Teller

Readers familiar with the Biblical story of Samson probably remember only a few basic facts about it: Samson was some kind of strong man, Delilah cut his hair, and somehow he ended up pulling down a building. These are in fact the typical motifs depicted in any art based on the story. But like so many other narratives from the Bible or any other foundational text of a society, we often lose sight of the details, details which, when examined closely, make such narratives both more strange and prescient than we initially thought.

Found in the book of Judges (13-16), the story of Samson begins with an angel declaring to a barren Hebrew woman that she will bear a son who will "begin to deliver Israel" from its bondage under the Philistines. This child, the angel says, shall be a nazarite—a person especially consecrated to God—and thus, his mother shall not "drink wine or strong drink," nor shall a "razor…come on his head."

We learn that "the spirit of the Lord" stirs in Samson as a young man. But, puzzlingly, the next event we hear about is his hasty marriage to a Philistine woman of Timnah, an act which is supposed to be "a pretext to act against the Philistines." At the wedding, Samson poses a riddle to the Philistine guests, and wagers a handsome sum that they will not guess the answer.

But the guests press Samson's new wife to coax the answer from Samson, and after seven days of her weeping and nagging (yes, that's the word used in the English translation) he tells her, and she tells the Philistine guests.

When the guests give Samson the answer, Samson is so angry that he kills 30 Philistine men of the town to steal their garments to pay the wager, and leaves his new wife in a huff—only to return later to burn the Philistine fields and slaughter many more Philistines.

Later, Samson falls in love with another Philistine woman, Delilah. She is similarly pressed by the Philistine aristocracy to learn the secret of Samson's supernatural strength. Samson eventually betrays his secret: "Finally, after [Delilah] had nagged him with her words day after day, and pestered him, he was tired to death. So he told her his whole secret." Delilah has Samson's hair cut off, which leaves him weakened; the Philistines capture him and gouge out his eyes.

The Philistines are so jubilant that they make Samson entertain them at a great feast to their own god, Dagon. While in the great Philistine theater, Samson offers a prayer for renewed strength: "Remember me and strengthen me only this once, O God, so that with this one act of revenge I may pay back the Philistines for my two eyes."

Samson's strength returns, he pushes apart the two main pillars of the theater, and "those he killed at his death" in the collapsing theater "were more than he had killed in his life."

The narrative struck many of our Great Books members as bizarre, and surely from the perspective of a largely secular West, it is: perhaps expecting a moral tale, modern readers find a story devoid of anything resembling clear moral teaching. Perhaps expecting an unequivocal good-guy hero, modern readers find a violent and selfish man capable of mass murder.

Many of our group found the story an example of the more general (and often unfair) belief that all religion is necessarily violent, and many members found it difficult to restrict discussion of the story to the text itself. But one thing is certain: our sanguine, free-ranging, and lively discussion was a testament to the power of religious texts to stir emotion and controversy in an age haunted by the specter of violence committed in the name of God.

Recycle this paper..

your children depend upon it!

New Visalia Middle School Named

Staff Reports

Visalia Unified's newest school has a name - Ridgeview Middle School.

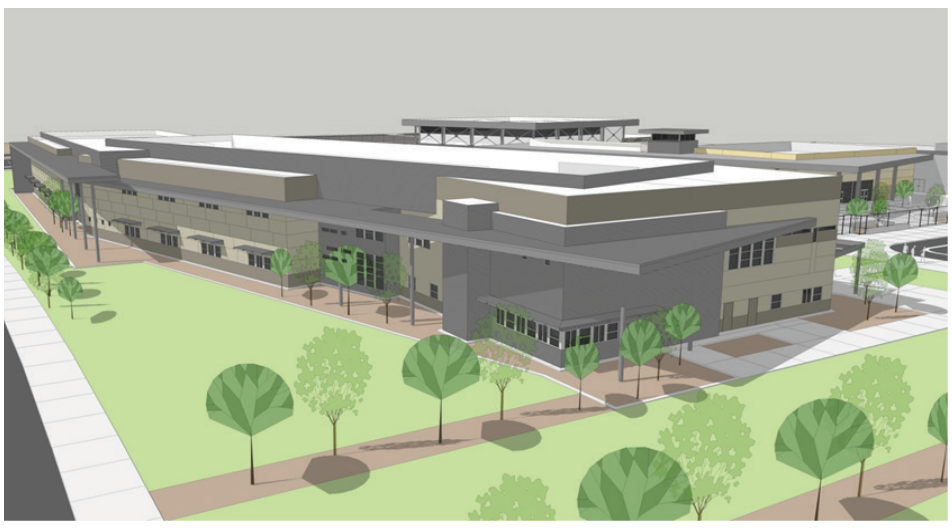
This name reflects the environment surrounding the new school and, in particular, the view of the Sierra Nevada foothills from the second floor of the new school's academic building.A committee of students, parents, community members, and board members worked together to make recommendations on school names, mascots and colors.

The committee worked from a list of potential names and mascots developed from a survey of hundreds of students who will attend the school next year. The school name, mascot, and colors were confirmed by the Visalia Unified Board of Trustees at their February 23meeting

The opinion of students was particularly important in the selection of the new school's name, mascot, and colors. Among the most popular mascot during the selection process was "Raptors."A raptor is a bird of prey, and "Raptors" underscores a connection to the elementary schools that the students who will attend Ridgeview Middle School. The mascots of those elementary schools are various types of birds.

The Board selected purple and white as the school colors.

Ridgeview Middle School is the fifth middle school in Visalia Unified. It is located in the northwest area of Visalia, near the intersection of Akers Avenue and Riggin Avenue. The school will open to students in August.



Artist's rendering of Ridgeview Middle School. Courtesy/VUSD

WHCC Accepting Nominations for Alumnus of the Year Until March 18

West Hills College Coalinga is looking for its next Alumnus of the Year.

The Office of the President will accept nominations until 5 p.m. on March 18. Nomination forms can be picked up in the Office of the President, 300 Cherry Lane, in Coalinga. The recipient will be notified no later than mid-April and will be presented with the award during May commencement.

"The West Hills College Coalinga Alumni of the Year award is a historic part of our graduation ceremony," said Dr. Carole Goldsmith, WHCC President.

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Calendar

Mondays: Bridge Club, 9:30am-2pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Admission is free. For additional information call: Joan Dinwiddie @ 732-0855

Mondays: Knitters, 10am-12:30pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Everyone is welcome.

Fridays: Women's Morning Bible Study, 9am-Noon
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. For additional information call: 739-9010

Saturdays: Cup of Jazz, 10am-Noon
At Cafe 210, at 210 Center street, Visalia. Free. Led by Richard Garoogian. Call 559.730.0910 for more information.

2nd Tuesday, Monthly: Yappy Hour, 5-9pm
Well-mannered, leashed pets are welcome on the patio at the Planing Mill Artisan Pizzeria, 514 East Main Street, Suite A, in Visalia. A portion of the proceeds is donated to the Valley Oak SPCA. For more information, call 651-1111.

1st Wednesday, Monthly through June 8: South Valley Guitar Society Meeting, 7-8:30pm
All acoustic musicians and music lovers are welcome to join at 1849 E. Tulare Rd. in Lindsay. The more styles of music, the better. A featured performer each month during the first half of the meeting. During the second, anyone is welcome to play. Share a song or simply enjoy the music. Bring snack to share. Every first Wednesday of the month through June 8. For more information, call **559-303-3943.**

1st Thursday Monthly through October: Diabetes Support Group, 5:30-7pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer a free diabetes support group through October from on the first Thursday of the month at the Kaweah Delta Chronic Disease Management Center, 325 Willis St., Visalia. Information: 624-2416.

1st Thursday, Monthly: Veterans Support Group, 5:30-7pm
Free support group for global war on terrorism & post 9-11 (Veterans Only) at the Tulare Public Library, 475 North M Street in Tulare. Facilitated by: Dr. Lance Zimmerman, Ph.D of veterans Counseling Clinic. "The transition from serving in a combat zone to civilian life can be a difficult one. Combat veterans commonly experience feelings of depression, isolation, alienation, guilt, anxiety, and anger following their service. If you're experiencing these or any other emotional problems after serving in a combat zone, it's vital to seek professional help. " -Veterans Counseling Clinic.

3rd Thursday Monthly through October: Diabetes Support Group, 5:30-7pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer a free diabetes support group through October on the third Thursday of the month at Woodlake Manor Apartments, 200 E. Sierra Avenue ,Woodlake. Information: 624-2416.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Gathering At the Oval, 12:30-1pm
Lifting up the needs and concerns of Visalia through individual prayer and meditation at Oval Park, 808 North Court Street in Visalia. For more information, call 967-4065.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Board Game Night, 6-7:45pm
For ages 10+ at the Visalia Branch Library, 200 West Oak Street. Sign-ups are not required. For more information, call 713-2703.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Ladies' Night, 6-10pm
At the Clay Cafe in Visalia, 1018 E. Mineral King Ave. $10 studio fee with ceramic purchase. Includes complimentary margarita, dinner and dessert. Door prizes too! Reservations required: 733-2022

1st and 3rd Thursdays, Monthly: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

Last Thursday Monthly through October: Diabetes Support Group, 5:30-7pm
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer a free diabetes support group through October on the last Thursday of the month at Sand Creek Apartments, 41020 Rd. 124, Orosi. Information: 624-2416.

Every Thursday in April: Back Country Backpacking, 7:45-9pm
Have you ever wanted to take an extended trip to the Sierra, but weren't sure what to bring or where to go? This class, in College of the Sequoias, San Joaquin Building, Room 1, will teach you what to bring, how to prepare and the best places to visit for your interests. Dr. Tom Lionvale instructs this course, all about fun and will be capped off by a 3-day weekend in the Sierra to let you apply what you learned. Although designed for the inexperienced, those with moderate experience have commented that the course was valuable and fun. Youth ages 10-17 are welcome to take the class, as long as they are accompanied by an adult. The trip is May 6,7 and 8. Cost is $100. For more information, call Dr. Lionvale at 733-7442.

February 10th – March 16th (Every Wednesday for 6 weeks 10am-12:30pm)
April 5th – May 10th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am -12:30pm)
July 12th – August 16th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)
October 4th – November 8th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)
If you would like to learn how to better manage your health, sign up for a free six-week workshop presented by Kaweah Delta Health Care District. The workshop is designed to help people with ongoing health problems such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, asthma, or any other chronic condition. Class size is typically around 12-18 participants. Each session lasts 2 ½ hours. Topics that are covered include: dealing with difficult emotions, managing symptoms, goal setting, problem solving, nutrition, understanding medications, making informed treatment decisions, and increasing strength and stamina through better fitness. This workshop was developed by Dr. Kate Lorig at Stanford University. Participants demonstrate significant improvements in the areas covered. They also report fewer hospitalizations and outpatient visits. The Empowerment for Better Living CDSMP workshops will be offered on a quarterly basis at the newly opened Chronic Disease Management Center located at 325 Willis Street in Visalia.

March 5, 12, 18, 19: EMT Refresher Courses, 8:30am-5pm
Room: HC 2021, Porterville College. Instructor: Mr. Manny Santoyo, EMT-P. Four-Day Refresher Course - $185.00. This includes 3 days of didactic skills (24 hours) and 1 day of skills. Three-Day Refresher Course (skills not included) – $110.00.Two-Day Refresher Course (16 hours) – $80.00.

One-Day Refresher Course (8 hours) – $50.00. Skills Day ONLY – $80.00.

March 5, April 2, May 7, June 4: Visalia Music School Open Mic, 7-9:30pm
Bring your Instrument. We do have drums, mic, PA System and extra guitars. We want to watch and hear you perform. 4,000 square feet of musical fun. We will be in the Performance Hall at 2332 W Whitendale Avenue, Suite A, B, & C. $5.00 at the door, Pizza and Soda for small fee. Call (559) 627-9500 for more Info.

MARCH

March 3: Celtic Music and Chants from Around the World, 7pm
Mount Shasta keyboardist, harmonica and tabla player Anton Mizerak and singer Laura Berryhill will present an evening of Celtic songs,transformational healing mu sic and chants from around the world at 7 p.m. at the Center for Spiritual Living, 117S. Locust Street, Visalia. Tickets $15.559 625-2441 or www.cslvisalia.org.

March 5: Tulare County CROP Hunger Walk, 8am
Registration begins at 8am and the walk at 9am from St. Paul's Anglican Church. Please join this community wide walk to raise awareness and money for worldwide and local hunger relief. Twenty-five percent of money raised will be donated to FoodLink of Tulare County. Since the first walk n 1976, CROP walkers have raised over $400,000 in these efforts, with $100,000 remaining in Tulare County. The faces of the walkers have changed in 40 years but the spirit and purpose remain the same: to alleviate hunger throughout the world. For more information: contact Joy Marshall at 734-6477

March 5: Saturday Morning Farmers Market, 8-11:30am
Music by Jordan and Moore. Hunt for Good Nutrition Kids Coloring Pages at the Market. Bring your kids out to color at the market, and go on an interactive Hunt for Good Nutrition! By completing educational coloring pages, kids will learn the nutritional composition of common foods found at the Farmers Market, what foods are in season, what foods are grown in California and the Central Valley, and kids will be encouraged to discover where their food comes from! Check in by the Market Managers Booth during market hours to play, from 8am to 11:30am!

March 5: Newt Blitz: Use Your Newtle, 9am-4pm
Are you interested in newts, plants, butterflies, owls, other wildlife, or plants? If so, you are invited to join Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks' staff in a BioBlitz Series—three events with outdoor activities to search for, observe, photograph, capture/release, identify, and record a host of diverse critters and plants found in these parks. BioBlitz events are geared for ages 5 – Adult. Each BioBlitz is open to a limited number of participants and varies in meeting time and location, hike difficulty, subject matter, and equipment. The BioBlitz Series is sponsored by the National Park Service, in cooperation with the Sequoia Parks Conservancy, as part of a nationwide celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of the National Park Service. Info and reservations for all BioBlitzes at these parks in 2016: http://www.exploresequoiakingscanyon.com/bioblitz-series.html

March 5: 2nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament Benefitting the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter, 9am
A Shotgun start at the Lemoore Golf Course for this 4-person scramble. $100 per person/$400 per team includes green fees, cart rental and lunch. For more information call 415-7202.

March 5: Youth Fishing Derby, 9-11am
Porterville Parks and Leisure Services is hosting their annual Spring Fishing Derby. Young anglers, ages 2-15 years old, are invited to enter the competition to showcase their skills and enjoy some outdoor fun. Trophies will be awarded to the top three children in both the 2-7 and 8-15 year old age divisions, as well as to the overall biggest fish. The Success Bass Club will also be on hand to help youngsters. This year's event sponsors include the Porterville Breakfast Lions, The Success Bass Club and Carroll's Tire Warehouse. Participants must be able to reel in their own fish and provide their own rod and bait. Pre-registration wrist-

bands may be purchased for $3 at the Heritage Center, 256 E. Orange Avenue in Porterville, during regular business hours. Wristbands will be sold for $5 on the day of the event only if space is available. For more information about the Fishing Derby, call the Heritage Center at 791-7695, visit the City of Porterville website or check out Parks and Leisure on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for all the latest updates.

March 5: March Madness Market, 10am
March Madness Market, Shopping, Games, Raffles and much, much more! Join Stella Gutierrez, Mary Kay consultant, at the Church of Christ, 320 E. Firebaugh, Exeter. Keep calm and go shopping!

March 5: California Native American Culture and Resource Fair, 10am-3pm
Native Vendors, Informational Booths and Indian Tacos at 1401 W. Caldwell Avenue in Visalia. This event is open to the community so come out and support your Native American artists. Are you interested in hosting a booth? Please contact me for any questions: Crystal Ruiz, Tulare County Language Coordinator (559)738-8248 or (559) 967-0940.

March 5: Hanford Walking Tour, 10:45am
Explore the Hanford Carnegie Museum, Taoist Temple, Kings Art Center, Fox Theater, and the Episcopal Church. Dave Jones is leading the tour and The Hanford Carnegie Museum are the hosts.

March 5: Queens of Style, An International Women's Day Celebration, 10am-5pm
To celebrate International Women's Day, the Urbanists Collective is hosting an urban art exhibit and demonstrations of graffiti art by women artists. Special guests will be internationally known artist, DJ Agana, and some of her artists. At the old Visalia Lumber Yard, Oak and Garden streets, from 11-5pm. The artists will also have a panel discussion from 10-11 at the Arts Consortium, 400 N. Church. www.urbanistscollective.com.

March 5: The Emerald Duo, 4pm
Musica Viva presents The Emerald Duo (Susan Doering, violin; Dieter Wulfhorst, violoncello) "Dances From Around the World." Free admission at St. Paul's Anglican Church, 120 N. Hall Street, Visalia. For further information: (559) 392-1425 or dwcello@yahoo.com

March 5: VTown Roller Derby Double Header, 5:30-9:30pm
VTown Roller Derby Presents Women's Flat Track Roller Derby Double Header. Doors open at 5:00: Bout 1, VTown Derby Dames vs B.A.D. She-Vil Dead, 5:30pm; Bout 2, VTown Derby Darlings vs Wasteland Derby Dames, 7:30pm. Advanced tickets are $10.00, kids 10 and under are free. $12.00 at the door. Purchase tickets at Roller Towne, The Crystal Barn, The Loft Thirft Store - Fresno, Brownpapertickets.com or from your favorite skater. For more information, go to www.vtownderbydames.com

March 5: Zonta Evening of Art and Wine, 6-9pm

The 12th Annual Evening of Art and Wine is scheduled for Saturday March 5th at the Nuckols Ranch, 13144 Rd. 216, in Porterville, CA. Our featured artists is photographer Michael Hansen and mosaic artist Patty Massaro. The evening includes wine tasting, appetizers, raffles, live and silent auctions, plus music. Proceeds go to support the Zonta Club of Porterville projects and the Porterville Zonta Foundation. Admission is $35. For more information call Valerie Simonich at (559) 784-9076. Tickets are available at Eventbrite.com.

March 5: Visalia Elks Lodge Annual Wine, Beer & Gourmet Food Tasting, 6-9pm
A silent auction and great music. this event benefits the Elks children's charity and C.A.S.A. of Tulare County. Tickets $30.00 per person, or table of eight $ for 275. For more information, call the office at 734-6762, or call: 284-0044.

March 6: 2016 Rocky Hill Triathlon, 8am to 12pm
For information, call (559) 280-9431 or email:duby@sequoiaorange.com. or see: www.rockyhilltriathlon.com. Sponsorships are available.

March 9: College of the Sequoia's Cultural Historical Awareness Program (CHAP), 7-9pm
Milton's Contribution to the History of Intellectual Freedom and Inquiry, with Professor Stephen Fallon, at the COS Visalia campus Ponderosa Lecture Hall. For more information on these and other events, contact COS Public Information (publicinfo@cos.edu)

March 9: Way Back Wednesdays--Classic Flicks at the Fox, 7pm
On the second Wednesday monthly through April, 2016, the Visalia Fox Theatre presents a classic film. Admission is $5 and includes a small popcorn. Tonight: The Quiet Man, 1952.

March 10: Valley Oak Quilt Guild Meeting, 10am
Valley Oak Quilt Guild www.valleyoakqg.org will meet at Tulare Community Church, 1820 N. Gem, in Tulare. Wendy Mathson (www.quiltsbywendy.com) will give a lecture on the 'Storm at Sea' pattern, an ocean of possibilities. She will also teach a workshop on March 11 on Storm at Sea variations. For more information contact: Diane at 559-733-8536.

March 11: COS Football Annual Crab Feed, 5pm
College of the Sequoias' 2016 Football Crab Feed Fundraiser will be Friday, March 11, in the Dr. S. Thomas Porter Field House. Tickets are $50 per person or $375 for an eight-person table, and all proceeds go to support COS Football student-athletes. This annual event features all-you-can-eat crab with sides and dessert, no host bar, live and silent auction, music and dancing. Social hour begins at 5pm and the program starts at 6pm. The team uses this fundraiser to support transportation and meals for away games, equipment replacement and other items that help give the students the best possible athletic and academic opportunities. Tickets can be purchased through cos.edu/Foundation or by calling the COS Foundation at 559.730.3861 or Head Coach Irv Pankey at 559.737.6203.

March 11: Tulare Rotary Club's 20th Annual Crab Feed, 6-9pm
All-You-Can-Eat Crab - Silent Auction & Live Auction (Featuring David Macedo) at the International Agri-Center, Heritage Complex. It is our hope that you will be able to participate as an important sponsor. If you would like to help, please select the appropriate Sponsorship Package below. This event sells out every year, so reserve your sponsorship and/or buy tickets today! Sponsorship recognition deadline is Friday, March 4. Tickets are $60 each; Tables of 8 are $480.

March 11: Wildest Weather in the Solar System, 7pm
Join us on a spectacular journey to witness the most beautiful, powerful, and mysterious weather phenomena in the solar system. From a storm the size of a 100-megaton hydrogen bomb to a 400-year-old hurricane to a dust tempest that could engulf entire planets, you'll be glad you live on Earth! At the Peña Planetarium in the Tulare County Office of Education Planetarium & Science Center, 11535 Avenue 264, Visalia. Tickets are available at the Planetarium office only after 5pm on the day of the evening show and only after 12pm on the day of the matinees. Tickets are $4 for adults and $3 for children 11 and under. Visitors may choose to see one or both matinees listed on the schedule. However, each show requires the purchase of a separate ticket. Children must be accompanied by an adult. No late seating is offered once the planetarium doors close. For information, call (559) 737-6334.

March 12: Saturday Morning Farmers Market, 8-11:30am
Music and Dance Performances by World Link Exchange. Music and dance performances of international dances and songs by World Link Exchange students! Providing "Exchange With A Purpose" is the mission of World Link, a private non-profit organization. World Link conducts exchange programs for youth through publicly sponsored projects that seek to improve the understanding and cooperation among the peoples and cultures of the world. Plant a Flower for National Plant a Flower Day. Come on out to the Visalia Farmers Market and plant your very own zinnia flower with Maddys Secret Garden and the Master Gardeners for National Plant a Flower Day! All ages are welcome to plant a zinnia for free to take home from 8am to 11:30am!

March 12: Tulare First Assembly of God 1st Annual Car Show, 9am-2pm
Gates open at 7am for entrants at the corner of Mooney Blvd. and Kern St. in Tulare. Pre-registration is $25, with a March 1 deadline. This includes a show tee shirt and one meal ticket. Registration the day of the show is $35. For more information call Tim Hall at 559-736-8986.

March 12: Porterville Education Foundation Golf Tournament, 11am
$100 per player or $400 per team, Lunch included. Raffle Prizes and Mulligans. $100 Tee Sponsorships.

March 12: Mother – Daughter Fashion Expo & Luncheon, 11:30am-1:30pm
The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education. All proceeds go to scholarships for Tulare County student teachers and first year teachers. At the Visalia Country Club 625 N. Ranch Street, Visalia. Tickets $30 Contact Terry Sayre for tickets 559-972-4124.

March 12: Visalia Breakfast Lions present Irishfest 2016, 1-5pm
Following the St. Patrick's Day Parade-Downtown Visalia. The Visalia Breakfast Lions, a community-minded service organization that donates thousands of dollars to over 20 local and national charities, is hosting the 5th annual Irish Fest at Rawhide Ballpark located at 345 N. Jacob St. Guests will be able to listen to music from local bands JJ Brown, Greg Delpit and the Subturanianswhile enjoying a sampling ofcraft beer from over 20 different craftbreweries. Food is included and consists of a variety of sausages, provided by B & L Quality Meats, Chili from the Visalia Fire Dept. This event is open to all guests 21 and over with all net proceeds benefiting local charities. Advanced tickets are on sale now for just $30.00 per person and can be purchased at the door for $35.00. All net proceeds from Irishfest 2016 will benefit local charities in Tulare County as a part of the continued efforts by the Visalia Breakfast Lions and its partners to make a difference in our community. For more information about Irish Fest 2016, contact Nick Seals at 559-651-4040, nseals@seals-biehle.com or http://www.visaliabreakfastlions.org/ .

Send your calendar items to: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

Sports

College of the Sequoias Baseball Looks to Meet Expectations

Stefan Barros

College of the Sequoias baseball has gotten off to slow start in 2016. The Giants' 2-7 start is especially strange, considering their recent string of winning seasons. Head Coach Jody Allen doesn't try to focus on what last year's team, or teams of years past accomplished--he tries to go into every season with a different set of expectations.

"Any time you struggle it's frustrating as a coach. At this level, you start over every year, but try to pick up where you left off the year before. It's not that easy. We have seven or eight new players in our everyday lineup right now. They're young and a little inexperienced right now."

Despite the slow start, Allen says his team cancompete with any team, and believes that the tough non-conference schedule is a reason for the 2-8 start. Every team they have faced was ranked in the top 20 in either NorCal or SoCal.

"We had a really tough non-conference schedule. Despite that, I felt like we could have competed better. We are just a young, inexperienced team right now. We returned just two regular pitchers from last year. We have other pitchers returning, but two of them we used regularly last year."

Allen does not want to put the team's struggles all on the pitching. He believes that all three aspects of the game have been to fault so far.

COS Baseball Head Coach Jody Allen. Courtesy/COS

"I don't want to blame one area. We've stubbed our toe when it comes to getting all the aspects together at once. Our pitching hasn't thrown consistent strikes, and has lead to some walks, but we've made some errors on defense as well."

Allen does feel some positives, especially from one player who is new to the program.

"Oscar Reyes is off to a good start. He's been out of high school for a couple years, but he's a freshman. We just converted him over to first base because of some shoulder problems, but he's done a great job offensively commanding the middle of our batting order."

Allen does hope that his team can find a groove just in time for Central Valley Conference play. The Giants began conference play just last week vs. West Hills College.

"One would hope that they can turn the corner. I believe this team will continue to get better. We just need to get better at the little things - bunting, doing the hit and run. We need to execute and play better baseball. It's not a shock that if we didn't play well, we'd struggle against these tough opponents."

With the recent successes of the program, it could be tough for a coach to go through a season when the team struggles. Allen admits that it can be hard on a coach in these circumstances.

"We're not asking anyone to be superman, but we want our pitchers to get ahead in counts, and to throw strikes. It's tough at this level, because you basically start over every year with the team you have. Corey Davis is really the only everyday player that's returned from last year, and our starting lineup consists of seven or eight new players."

As far as expectations for the rest of the season are concerned, Allen just wants to watch the games play out; he doesn't believe that his team has been thoroughly outplayed in any game this year.

"Results will take care of themselves. We haven't been outclassed, we just haven't played well. We just have to fix what we've been doing. The players are buying in to what we want to do here; they just have to concentrate on getting better. They can play with any of the teams we've faced."

The COS Giants will travel face Merced College on Tuesday, March 8. Their next home game will also be played against Merced on Thursday, March 10. Game time will be 2pm.

West Hills College Coalinga Hosts Intercollegiate Rodeo on March 10-11

Staff Reports

Spring is coming and, with it, the annual West Hills College Coalinga rodeo.

WHCC's men's and women's rodeo team will host competitors from six teams in the West Coast Region of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association on March 10 and 11, including schools from California and Nevada.

It's rare to have a community college compete with major four-year universities. The men and women from West Hills College Coalinga will not only compete with three other community colleges, but also against Fresno State, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and the University of Las Vegas. The community colleges competing are Feather River College, Lassen Community College, and Cuesta College.

"We are hosting this event because it is important to keep the tradition of rodeo alive," said WHCC Rodeo assistant coach Brooke Jackson. "West Hills College has had a nationally ranked college rodeo team for over two decades. Rodeo is a sport and we aim to keep the standards high and have competitive top-notch teams."

The rodeo opens in the WHCC rodeo arena at 6:30pm on Thursday, March 10 with a calf dressing contest featuring students and staff from West Hills College Coalinga. Applications for participation in this event should be directed to Gina Tollison at ginatollison@whccd.edu. The calf dressing contest will be split over two days, with one group of teams competing on Thursday and a second group of teams competing at 6:30pm on March 11.

Edgar Machado at last year's WHCC rodeo. Courtesy/West Hills College Coalinga

Thursday will see the teams participating in nine different events including bull riding, saddle bronc riding, bareback riding, tie-down roping, steer wrestling, team roping, barrel racing, breakaway roping and goat tying.

The rodeo will continue with a slack round on Friday at 9am. A championship round will be held at 6:30pm for the top contestants from Thursday's competition and the slack round.

Admission is $8 for adults and $5 for students 17 and under. Admission is free for WHC ASB members with cards and children under 10.

This rodeo will bring the competitors one step closer to the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, Wyoming from June 12-18. Since 1983, the WHCC rodeo program has sent at least one rodeo team member to the national finals each year. Jacob Lees represented WHCC at last year's event in bareback riding, finishing 30th.

The WHCC rodeo team has had a good season, which began in the fall and runs through the spring. The men's team is currently sitting in third place in the West Coast region while the women's team is sixth in the region.

Several individual members of this year's team are also highly ranked.

Brant Grisedale is ranked fourth in the region in saddle bronc riding. Thomas Nichols and Armando Fagliano are ranked third and fourth respectively in bull riding, Edgar Machado is ranked third in steer wrestling, J.T. Prather is ranked first as a team roping header and Wyatt Cox is ranked first for team roping heeler.

"We are proud of our rodeo program and its role in helping make West Hills College Coalinga an exceptional and diverse institution," said WHCC President Dr. Carole Goldsmith. "We are honored to host this annual event to showcase talented college rodeo teams from Nevada and California."

The rodeo arena is at 518 W. Gale Ave. in Coalinga. For more information, visit westhillscollege.com or contact coach Justin Hampton at (559) 934-2702.

Visalia Breakfast Lions Club

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Visalia with Parade and More!

Staff Reports

Visalia Breakfast Lions Club invites you to join them for the fun and festivities of this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade. The parade will stroll down Main Street on Saturday, March 12 at 10am.

Downtown will be filled with folks taking in the Irish Cheer, so arrive early to stake out your spot along the parade route. The parade will begin at Church Street, head West on Main Street and then North on Willis, ending at the just north of Center Street.

The parade committee is delighted to bestow this year's Grand Marshal Honor to, Marilynn Mitchell. We are excited to have her as our 2015 Grand Marshal. Come out and cheer for Marilynn Mitchell.

Excitement will fill Downtown Visalia with sounds of marching bands from Visalia and throughout Tulare County. There will be sirens sounding from the Visalia Police and Fire Departments as they kick-off and end the parade. Prancing horses, mascots, a variety of antique and collectable cars, as well as, floats and community groups will strut down Main Street in their St. Paddy's Day best.

KJUG Morning Radio Host Mike Pesto along with Chad, April Skye from Classic Rock 99.7 and Randy Hendix from 104.9 (all from Momentum Broadcasting) will be announcing the parade entries. They will be at different locations on the parade route so, come on down and find your favorite announcer.

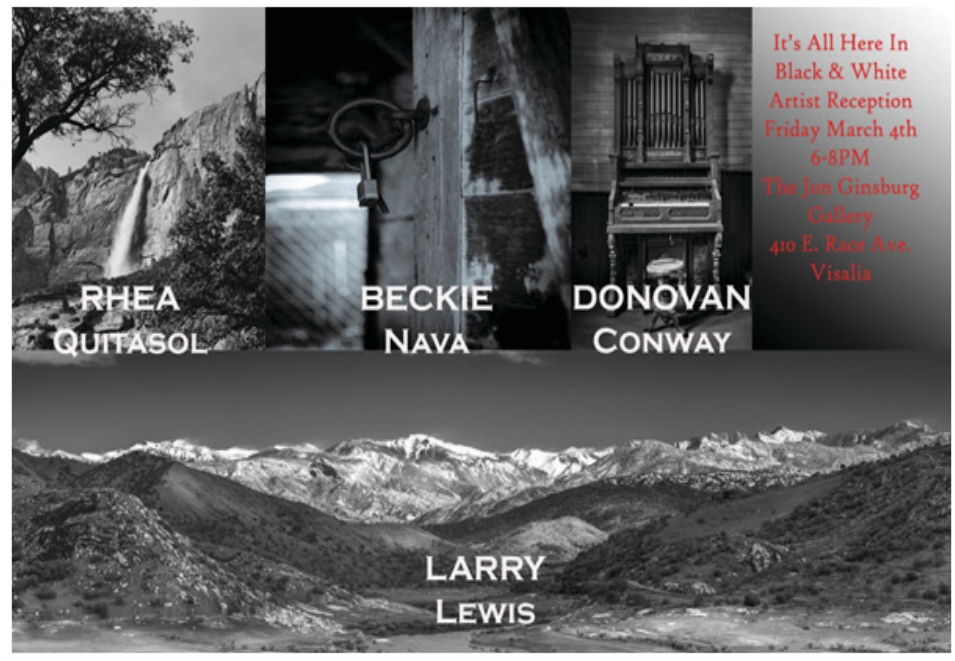
The fun and excitement goes on and on, but it doesn't stop with the parade--throughout the day, celebration will continue.

With so many events going on throughout the day, we have partnered with the Visalia Towne Trolley and will be offering FREE trolley rides from 1-5pm. The trolley will stop at numerous locations throughout downtown, as well as making stops at downtown parking garages and Rawhide Stadium.

We encourage everyone to come out and celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Downtown Visalia.

We thank our very special sponsors: Bueno Beverage Distributing and Budweiser, The Vintage Press, Le Boulevard, The Southern Pacific Depot, A & W, The Times Delta Media Group, Kaweah Delta Health Care District and Valley Business Bank.

For more information, visit, www.visaliabreakfastlions.org.(go to forms to register on line) or call Terry Culotta at 559-909-0091.



"It's All Here In Black & White"

Joan Constable

The Jon Ginsburg Gallery welcomes Donovan Conway, Larry Lewis, Beckie Nava and Rhea Quitasolto "It's All Here in Black & White", a black and white photography exhibit. All four photographers have made a name for themselves in the valley. Their work can be seen hanging in Valley Children's Hospital, Kaweah Delta Hospital and many local galleries. Please join us for our artists' reception held during First Fridays Downtown on March 4, 2016 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM in the gallery at 410 E. Race Ave., Visalia. Refreshments will be served and it is free to attend! The Visalia Trolley will be running between all venues open on First Friday as well.

The show is up March 3-April 15. Please call for further information or to visit the gallery during the week, Monday – Friday 10AM-3 PM.

The Jon Ginsburg Gallery at The Creative Center – (559) 733-9329, business office – 606 N. Bridge.

The Creative Center is a non-profit community arts center for adults with developmental disabilities with the mission of fostering self-expression, self-worth and personal growth through the arts, community integration, providing cultural resources to the community, and recognizing the individual's value and contribution.

We are honored to receive support for capital ventures through The Creative Center Foundation and community groups such as the Rotary and Lions Clubs.

Southern California Edison has also been a great supporter! Please visit us online at thecreativecenter-visalia.org, and visit visaliainc.com,artsconsortium.org to see what's happening at all of the Visalia Arts Consortium venues.

'Just Between Friends' Sale Offers Financial Relief for Valley Families

Staff Reports

The cost of raising children continues to go up, yet many Central Valley families have not seen a similar increase in their income. Any mom can tell you one of their biggest expenses is buying clothes for their kids, who often outgrow shoes every four months and clothes every year.

But help is on the way. This March, Central Valley moms can not only buy clothes 50-90% below retail but also sell their kids' used clothes to other parents.

Visalia will host its 13th annual Just Between Friends (JBF) Sale March 13-19 at the old Ross building, 3303 S. Mooney Blvd. in Visalia. JBF is Visalia and Fresno's largest kid's gear and clothing consignment sale. Don't miss the award-winning savings: Sell and Shop for newborn-teens! JBF community children's consignment events allow local moms to shop from tens of thousands of new and gently-used items like clothing, toys, baby gear, DVDs, crafting supplies, nursery décor and nice furniture at 50% to 90% off retail pricing. Moms who sell their items make up to 70% on their sold items, which is significantly more than traditional consignment options. And admission to the event is free.

"Just Between Friends is all about helping families save and earn money. I am so grateful that we have been able to do just that in hundreds of communities for thousands of families. With paychecks shrinking due to higher taxes while prices keep going up, families need Just Between Friends now more than ever," explained Mandi Milburn, event coordinator for the JBF sales in Visalia and Fresno.

Just Between Friends (JBF) Visalia holds two sales each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. The spring sale happens before Earth Day making it a great time for families to recycle gently worn clothes into a new wardrobe for another family or recycle their used baby accessories to help new parents protect their child without going into debt.

Moms will have a second opportunity to shop for huge discounts at the JBF Sale in Fresno April 14-16 at the Fresno Fairgrounds. For more information on Just Between Friends Visalia/Fresno sales, visit www.Visalia.jbfsale.com or www.Fresno.jbfsale.com . You can also find the sales on Facebook.

Event Details

Who: Parents, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles, Teachers and Daycare Providers

What: Shop for children ages 0-teens at the Just Between Friends Children's & Maternity Consignment Sales Event

When: March 13-19, 2016

Where: Former "Ross Dress For Less" in the Sequoia Mall, 3303 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, 93277

Hours:
Sunday-Thursday (March 13-17, 2016)
10am-7pm
Friday, March 18, 2016
10am-8pm (25% Off most items)
Saturday, March 19, 2016
10am-3pm (50% Off most items)

About Just Between Friends

In 1997, Just Between Friends was created in a living room in Tulsa, Oklahoma when Shannon Wilburn, a mother of two young children, and her friend Daven Tackett hosted a sale, while inviting 17 friends to be consigners. Promoted only in their neighborhood, the gross sales reached approximately $2,000. That's when the idea caught on. Each season, a new, larger event was held. In 2003, Wilburn and Tackett formed Just Between Friends Franchise Systems, Inc., and began developing and selling franchises. Currently, Wilburn, now sole owner of Just Between Friends Franchise Systems, Inc., has 112 franchises in 22 states. JBF has received national attention on several national television shows including The Today Show, ABC News, Good Morning America, CNN, Headline News, Inside Edition and CNBC's The Big Idea. They have also been featured in The Seattle Times, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Sacramento Bee, LA Times, Daily Oklahoman as well popular websites www.sheknows.com and Disney website www.family.com and broadcast outlets in dozens of cities across the country including Dallas, Houston, Minneapolis, Denver and Seattle.

On Facebook at facebook.com/ourvalleyvoice
Print replica edition at issuu.com/ourvalleyvoice

Annual Fishing Derby to be Held at Murray Park Pond, March 5

Nancy Vigran

Kids! It's time to get out those fishing poles and participate in this year's Spring Fishing Derby at the Murray Park Pond in Porterville from 9-11am on Saturday, March 5.

This event is always a sell-out, with 225 children entered from 2-15 years of age.

Every year, shortly before the event, the pond is restocked with trout, so there is a good chance of catching at least one, if not several fish, during the morning tournament.

Children are allowed help with baiting their hook and casting their line, but each must reel in their own catch, as per derby rules, said Amy Graybehl, City of Porterville leisure service specialist.

Kids may enlist the help from their parents or grandparents who chaperon the event, or they may seek help from one of the dozen or so members present from the Success Bass Club.

Jerry Williams, vice president of the Bass Club, helps instruct children until he becomes too busy weighing fish and keeping track of each competitor's stats.

"It helps out the community," Williams said.

Williams also goes out and purchases raffle items to give away at the tournament, such as fishing poles, tackle boxes and more.

He enjoys encouraging the sport of fishing, he said.

"My dad took me down there to Lake Success, since I was two – as far back as I can remember," Williams said.

Williams participates in local bass tournaments and occasionally goes deep-sea fishing to fill up the freezer.

He enjoys helping teach children how to fish.

"There are some who pick it up right away," he said. "We help them choose their gear – the right-sized weights for the bait they're throwing and so forth.

"Sometimes it is a chore (for the younger children to reel in their own fish)," he said. "But, they do a pretty good job, and a lot of the little guys reel them in."

Act fast to participate in this year's Spring Fishing Derby. Courtesy/City of Porterville Parks and Leisure

Williams releases the fresh water fish he catches, and he encourages the children to do the same, unless they will end up on the dinner table.

Each fish is weighed prior to being rereleased. That is part of the stats he and other Bass Club members keep to determine the top anglers at the end of the event.

Children are divided into two divisions, 2-7 year-olds and 8-15 year-olds. Prizes are given to the largest string of fish (total fish caught) in teach division, Graybehl said.

Trophies are awarded to the top three in each class.

There is also a prize for the largest catch of the day by any age fisherman.

Participants must bring their own pole and bait.

Pre-registration wristbands may be purchased for $3 at the Heritage Center, 256 E. Orange Avenue in Porterville, during regular business hours.

Wristbands will be sold for $5 on the day of the event, only if space is available.

For more information about the Fishing Derby, call the Heritage Center at 791-7695, or visit the City of Porterville website, www.ci.porterville.ca.us/depts/ParksandLeisure/